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THE CRESSET

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Contributors

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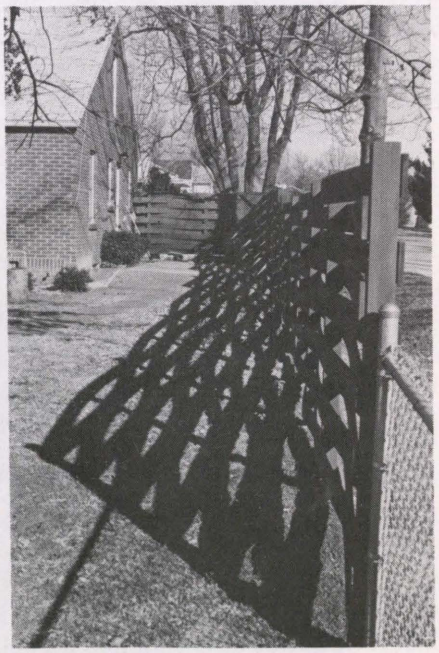

Diane Vatne, *La Bocca Della Verita,* 1981, foyer of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, Rome, Italy. B&w photograph, 11-3/4" x 7-3/4".

Cover: Diane Vatne, *Peeling Shadow,* 1980, Bloomington, IN. B&w photograph, 11-3/4" x 7-3/4".

An exhibition of Diane Vatne's photographs has been scheduled for Valparaiso University's Mueller Hall Gallery Oct. 23-Nov. 16. RHWB

IN LUCE TUA

Comment on Contemporary Affairs by the Editor

America the Polarized?

Those of us who participated in the original March on Washington in August, 1963 will forever remember it as one of the great public moments of our lives. We were part of a grand historic occasion, privileged both to witness an unsurpassed rhetorical performance—Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech—and to be included in a mass political protest whose moral rectitude we would never have reason, even for a minute, to doubt. There was no uncertainty, no ambiguity: we marched in the ranks of human decency, and no one with a good political conscience could march against us. Not often does politics offer opportunities of such unsullied good faith.

The new March on Washington of this past August 27 was an exercise in nostalgia, an attempt to relive and rekindle the moral fervor and political momentum of the original event. But in politics as in life, you can't go home again. This year's march was of an entirely different, and lesser, order than that of twenty years ago. The crowds were there, and the oratory strained to meet the occasion (the strain showed: Jesse Jackson's "from the outhouse to the White House" fell considerably short of King's magnificent cadences), but we doubt that anyone seriously supposes that the second March on Washington will carry anything like the historical resonance of the first.

It lacked, to begin with, moral focus and clarity. When King marched, the issue was simple: fundamental human and social rights for black Americans. To oppose them was to oppose what America was all about. The marchers carried with them the promise of American life, and, deep down, almost all Americans understood that—which is why Congress wrote into law in the 1964 and 1965 Civil Rights Acts those things that the marchers insisted on.

This time around, Congress could only meet the marchers' demands by arranging to vote in the millennium or, at the very least, by decreeing that life be no longer difficult. A protest ostensibly committed to jobs, peace, and freedom contained within its ranks elements of every cause imaginable. They were all there: from the mainstream (civil rights, nuclear freeze, economic justice) to beyond the fringe (Sikhs for peace, boycott Campbell's soup, southern dykes for human rights). A number of communist and communist-front groups added to the march's breadth of range, if not to its political legitimacy.

Like Winston Churchill's pudding, this march had no theme. Even on the issue of civil rights, it could not command the moral urgency of its predecessor. The world is not necessarily a more complicated place than it was twenty years ago, but the civil rights issue certainly is. On matters of affirmative action (employment and educational quotas) and compulsory busing, there is not at all the kind of self-evident moral consensus that could be presupposed in 1963 with regard to political rights and guarantee of equal access to public goods and facilities. The moral lines were less clearly drawn this past August than two decades ago, and no matter how often or how desperately speakers invoked Martin Luther King's presence, the occasion had nothing of the moral grandeur of the original.

And beyond the issue of civil rights, moral ambiguity drifted into moral anarchy. Organizers of the march, exhibiting the protest culture's customary absence of humility, christened their movement the New Coalition of Conscience. If so, the conscience in question appears notably expansive and latitudinarian. In embracing all causes all at once, the march necessarily sacrificed coherence and precision. Save the world, save the whales: everything dissolved into everything else with little sense of priority or ethical discrimination. One couldn't help recalling Rome's traditional rebuke to Protestant enthusiasts that in following the dictates of conscience, we must first ensure that our consciences are rightly informed.

Yet it would be misleading to focus too narrowly on the march's lack of a moral center. The marchers were in fact united, but the ground of their unity was political rather than moral. The glue that held everything else together was, as one speaker expressed it, a commitment to "rid the world of Reaganism." It was in opposition to the President and to the policies associated with his Administration that these disparate groups found reason to march in unison. Ronald Reagan has become the focus of ideological divisions in America in a way matched in our political history only by Franklin Roosevelt. Like FDR, Reagan arouses intensities of support and opposition unfamiliar in our politics. And as was also the case with FDR, the emotions aroused have far more to do with his policies than with his personality. People hated Richard Nixon (it is hard to think of anyone loving Richard Nixon) not simply because they disagreed with him but because they found him an untrustworthy and unattractive human being. Most people like Reagan personally—even as most people found Roosevelt naturally charming—but for those on the political Left Reagan symbolizes all that they oppose,

Beyond Reagan as symbol, it is difficult to define precisely the nature of the ideological gulf that divides those who marched and those who would have nothing to do with the march.

even detest, on ideological grounds.

Beyond Reagan as symbol, it is difficult to define precisely the nature of the ideological gulf that divides those who marched and those who would have nothing to do with the march. Some describe it simply in socio-economic terms as a contrast between haves and have nots, between those whom the system treats well and those whom it treats badly. Gloria Steinem, the feminist leader, apparently had something like this in mind when she remarked that the only people not represented in the march were wealthy middle-aged white males. (For her, this meant the almost certain defeat of President Reagan in 1984.)

But it was not only the poor and disadvantaged who took part in the march. Steinem herself is part of a group that, while it might have serious grievances against the system, is not located anywhere near the bottom of America's socio-economic ladder. Feminism is a largely middle-class phenomenon. So is the gay rights movement. So also is the anti-nuclear cause that played so prominent a role in the march. Contemporary American political divisions cannot be understood simply in terms of class.

A satisfactory explanation of our ideological divisions must take into account all those issues beyond economics that do not fall neatly into class categories. We might say that our most critical distinction lies between those who can basically affirm current American values, systems, and practices and those who cannot. Such a distinction makes room for economic grievances and satisfactions but does not confine itself to them. It allows room as well for consideration of issues involving social policy, foreign affairs, and cultural style. Those who fervently oppose Reagan and who found themselves in sympathy with the march are those who feel alienated in some fundamental way from American reality; those who support Reagan (or oppose him without emotional fervor) and who see no reason to march are those who feel essentially comfortable with that reality. Many Americans, to be sure, would resist making so stark a choice, but events like the march indicate that it is in such a polarized direction that our politics is heading. Behind many of our specific disagreements over policy choices lie entirely conflicting perceptions of what America is and what it ought to be.

We have seen all this before. In the late Sixties and early Seventies disagreements over race relations and Vietnam threatened to tear the country apart. People on opposite sides of issues came to doubt their opponents' patriotism and morality. Soon they were fighting over rightful appropriation of national symbols: remember when you could read people's politics by observing whether or not they stuck flag decals in their car windows? It was an ugly and divisive time, during which Americans on opposing sides of the cultural divide became, in Rainer C. Baum's phrase, "ethical strangers" to one another.

We are not yet back to such an impasse, but ominous signs abound. What we are once again in danger of losing is the ability to agree to disagree. That becomes difficult when political differences regularly get translated into moral categories. Thus many of those who participated in the Washington march would reject the analysis offered here that distinguishes between political and moral elements in their protest. For them, opposition to Ronald Reagan is less a political opportunity than a moral imperative. When large numbers of people start thinking that way, political civility cannot long be maintained. Many of our intellectuals and religious leaders have already lined up at the political barricades, and the rest of us may not be far behind.

The critical question is whether the moralistic mood will come to dominate political practice. In 1972, the Democratic party in a spasm of reform set up a system of campaign and convention rules whose result was the nomination of George McGovern, a man who wanted less to govern the country than to save its soul. McGovern's nomination, achieved at a convention that had earnestly rid itself of the influence of professional politicians, marked the high tide of the politics of conscience; his crushing loss to Richard Nixon brought the Democrats back to reality. The lesson of McGovernism has not been forgotten. One can't help noticing that the nomination of a new McGovern (perhaps Alan Cranston, or even, now that he has entered the race, McGovern himself) is the prospect Republican politicians most hope for and Democratic politicians most dread. Gloria Steinem is wrong: President Reagan will be a formidable opponent for any Democrat, especially one situated on the Left. And realistic Democrats understand that.

Yet even if the politicians, operating out of traditional instincts of self-preservation, manage in the short run to paper over the cultural fissures in our society, we will find it difficult to resist indefinitely the pressures toward polarization. The influence of the adversary culture continues to grow. It already pervades the mainstream church bureaucracies, the universities, and the elite media outlets. The people there, gripped in antinomian enthusiasms, view with dismay and even contempt an America dominated in their eyes by racism, sexism, militarism, and indifference to the fate of the poor. The distance between the dissenters and Middle America is vast. A half-century ago, John Dos Passos declared with radical bravado, "all right we are two nations." He was wrong then, but today . . . well today, who is to say?

Capitalism and the Moral Order

The Limits of Commercial Republicanism

Robert Benne

This essay is in the nature of an elaboration on one of the themes of my book, *The Ethic of Democratic Capitalism: A Moral Reassessment* (Fortress, 1981). In the last chapter of the book, I argue that one of the most important challenges facing our social system concerns the "cultural sphere," which I define as "the realm of symbolic meanings which give order, coherence, and moral direction to the whole society." Following Daniel Bell and, before him, Joseph Schumpeter, I raise the perplexing question whether capitalism will be destroyed by its successes rather than its failures. Both thinkers suggest that the culture produced by the successful workings of the market economy undercuts the values needed for economic, political, and social vitality. Successful capitalism, in a context of liberty, markets a short-sighted, chaotic, and selfish hedonism.

As I put the question: Can a people survive the combination of widespread affluence and freedom? Will their value system erode and finally collapse, necessitating an authoritarian solution that will neither tolerate freedom nor produce affluence? I end that chapter in a properly ambivalent manner, recognizing the danger we face but affirming a resilient health in the American moral-social order that will resist the centrifugal forces of hedonist culture. That moral health is based finally on the strength of a religious appropriation of reality, and I conclude that we may be experiencing a genuine religious renewal in this land. At least we have a fighting chance for such a renewal, given the strength and variety of our religious institutions.

That concluding chapter, however, was rather sketchy and unresolved, so I welcome the opportunity to engage in more thorough and systematic reflection on this subject, so that my conclusions can be more thoroughly and systematically unresolved.

When I engage persons in discussion about this erosion of the moral-social order, I get two sets of responses that might serve as a useful context for further reflection. One set I call the "not to worry" response, which catches the smugness of that proper English expression. The other set is the "I told you so" response, which relishes the connection of corrupt motivation with capitalist economic arrangements. I will analyze and quarrel with these two sets of responses, and then report on my own struggle to relate the market economy to the moral-social order.

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"Not to Worry"

Persons in this camp either deny that there is any real threat to the moral-social order, or, more likely, they see no real connection between that order and the economic order. In either case, they see no serious moral element impinging on economic life. At most, they say, the cultural sphere can predispose people toward healthy or unhealthy economic attitudes. Religious and moral traditions may inhibit viable economic life, as in the distrustful clannishness reported in Edward Banfield's analysis of the moral basis of backward societies, or it may facilitate economic life, as in the Protestant Ethic's orientation toward inner-worldly asceticism. But these are really not in the realm of morality, but are rather in that of desired or undesired non-moral values.

This camp does not worry about the health of the moral-social order because it views economic life as lying beyond or, better, beneath morality. Economic life is based upon self-interested, voluntary, and rational exchange in a functioning competitive marketplace. This camp's version of human nature is a minimalist one, emphasizing the discernible verities of human motivation. Humans are caught up in an evolutionary drive for survival and that impulse can be counted on. People have an interest in their own necessities. They will inexorably choose them in an utterly trustworthy fashion. Beyond necessities, they have wants that they order according to their own preferences—preferences which are highly subjective in character. Moreover, this group observes that humans are centers of spontaneous freedom, and if anything ought to be respected in a social system, it is that freedom. Further, humans are rational in the sense that they can fit means to ends. They can think consistently in finding

In the resplendent utilitarianism of the commercial republicans, politics and economics came to care for the body, and the soul—devoted to virtue and perfection—slipped out of sight.

the prudent and proper ways to fulfill their necessities and strive for their wants. (This is not reason with a capital "R"; it is much more modest than that.)

This view of human being, assumed in most micro-economic texts, does not depend much on morality. Even when it seems to, on closer look it involves a prudential morality, one that relies on fear of the loss of one's interest as a discipline for right action. This is neatly illustrated in a very attractive essay by Alfred Kahn on "The Place of Ethical Values in a Market System" (National Economic Research Associates, Inc., January 1981). Exhorting all of us to more restraint in our economic life, Kahn concludes: "Even pure self-interest has plenty of room in it for compromise and moderation, for considering that if I do this to all the rest of you, you will in time do the same to me, and we will all end up frustrated."

One should not easily dismiss such a position, for it anchors economic life in something very solid indeed; it does not try to base it on the fragile flower of morality. What's more, a whole paradigm of civilization can be constructed on this firm bedrock, one that has much to say for it and that bears an uncanny resemblance to our own.

Recently, two very interesting attempts have been made to uncover the intellectual and historical roots of such a paradigm. Ralph Lerner, in an essay called "Commerce and Character: The Anglo-American as New-Model Man" (*Liberation South, Liberation North* [Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1981]), calls this paradigm "commercial republicanism." Drawing from intellectual resources as diverse as Montesquieu and John Adams, Adam Smith and Benjamin Franklin, David Hume and Benjamin Rush, the proponents of the new order were united in this: "they saw in commercial republicanism a more sensible and realizable alternative to earlier notions of civic virtue and a more just alternative to the theological-political regime that had so long ruled Europe and its colonial periphery." Rather than base the new civilization on the vainglorious imagination and pretension of aristocratic and religious tradition, which constantly led to fanaticism, intolerance, and economic stagnation or disaster, the commercial republicans proceeded from the ordinary passions of ordinary men.

> Indeed, where the ancient polity, Christianity, and the feudal aristocracy, each in its own fashion, sought to conceal, deny, or thwart most of the common passion for private gratification and physical comfort, the commercial republic built on those passions.

And the mechanism for satisfying and harnessing those passions was the market. While the market was certainly not the instrument for realizing the grand dreams of priests and kings, it was the perfect vehicle for realizing the mild ambitions of middling men. The ethos created by such an arrangement led to a moderate and pragmatic polity, which widened the chances of freedom and prosperity for more people. Tocqueville put it well: "Violent political passions have little hold on men whose whole thoughts are bent on the pursuit of well-being. Their excitement about small matters makes them calm about great ones." What a marvelous way to place both economics and politics beneath morality, and in so doing build the bourgeois city!

Alan Bloom in "Commerce and Culture" (*This World* [Fall, 1982]) argues a similar line, but emphasizes the revolutionary break from traditional philosophy taken by the proponents of commercial republicanism. In building on low but solid ground, the emerging bourgeois civilization defused the dynamite lurking in the older perfectionist ideals. In its resplendent utilitarianism, politics and economics came to care for the body, and the soul—devoted to virtue and perfection—slipped away. It is not as though there was no room for virtue, truth, and perfection in the commercial republic; they were just edged off the main stage and became thankfully irrelevant to economics and politics. The market took over center stage and has remained there ever since.

The modern libertarians of course are in the lineage of the commercial republicans. But their orientation propounds a cold rationalism rather than the homey naturalism of the intellectual architects of the commercial republic. The earlier writers wrote against the backdrop of the old regime; they knew there were other paradigms than the commercial. And they knew the losses that came with the shift. Our current commercial republicans agree with their progenitors in their view of the centrality of the market as the organizing arena for most of life, in their animus toward perfectionist politics, and in their enthusiasm to extend marginal utility theory into family life, law, and politics. The only difference is that they are not aware that their applications drive out the soul.

I have spent so much time on proponents of the "not to worry" school because they are so formidable, not so much in their libertarian guise, but in the form of the innumerable practical thinkers and actors in our common life who have done so much to make this a tolerable commercial republic. But I think even they may be somewhat uneasy with the present state of affairs. Before I take up why I think they might be uneasy, though, I want to examine the other school, which is such a delight to us all.

"I Told You So"

This school's view of the relation of the market economy to the moral order is well known. We hear it re-

Economic life in market systems is neither as independent of morality as the commercial republicans (and today's libertarians) insist nor as opposed to it as their anti-capitalist critics maintain.

peatedly from many intellectuals of the church, from a preponderance of liberally educated persons, from Marxists and socialists, from many segments of the disadvantaged, and from those who claim to represent the disadvantaged. This perspective does not agree with Schumpeter and Bell that the effects of successful capitalism may lead to untoward moral and cultural results through the melancholy fact that the human race cannot handle affluence and freedom at the same time. On the contrary, from this perspective capitalist economic arrangements—market economies—are *in principle* opposed to the moral life. Conflict between the market economy and morality is inescapable. And this school certainly does not agree that one can build an adequate economy or polity on some trustworthy base below the level of morality, as the commercial republicans insist. What one will get is indeed low and base. Let me quote a former colleague's response to my book:

> Benne is sensitive to flaws in American society, but he lets the system off too easily when he locates these flaws primarily in terms of personal and social moral character. Americans are in mad pursuit of pleasure, self-indulgent, selfish, etc. No doubt that's true. Our doctrine of original sin tells us that these flaws lie in human nature. What is happening is that the American system—democratic capitalism—magnifies these flaws, drives them to extremity, and unleashes the rawest kinds of human impulses into the public sector. And so class conflicts, racial rivalry, crime, violence, murder, abortion, imperialistic wars, and lots more are the social fallout of a system that has worshipped the Golden Calf of capitalist economics.

There you have it stated with a bit of passion. Market economies encourage, legitimate, magnify, and even generate human greed. They are poison to human motivation, and the values they spew out are incompatible with morality.

The social effects of the system, rather than the homey harmony of the commercial republicans, include the generation of inequality, the destruction of community before the onslaughts of "possessive individualism," the imposition of exorbitant social costs on the most defenseless members of society, and a vulgarized and debased culture.

When such a corrosive system is unleashed on the broader world, we get an international social darwinism that feeds on the poor and oppressed of the world. The little fish are eaten by the big ones, and the system that allows that to happen, and in fact encourages it, is the international market system—capitalism.

This perspective is too well known to chronicle further. It simply denies that the market economy—and the polity that combines with it—leads to the kind of results the commercial republicans claim. Building a system on the lowest common denominator makes the lowest normative. Capitalism is antithetical to morality, and the only proper response to it is to transform it into some new economic arrangement.

A Constructive Conversation

In the following I wish to argue that *economic life in market systems is neither as independent of morality as the commercial republicans (and their latter-day saints—the libertarians) aver nor as opposed to it as their anti-capitalist critics maintain.* (My remarks will not wrestle with that anomoly on the intellectual frontier, George Gilder, who makes the theological and moral virtues of faith, hope, and love the driving springs of capitalism. No one quite knows what to make of him.)

A wise person once told me that the best discussion emerges from conversation among friendly critics—parties who share enough to be able to argue constructively about their differences. I'm a friendly critic of the commercial republicans, for I believe their more modest expectations for civil life and for history itself have led to results that outstrip their expectations. On the whole, commercial republics are more attractive than any of the perfectionist models; they have achieved a more persuasive mix of freedom, tolerance, innovation, social equality, mobility, and general well-being than their competitors. They certainly do have their glaring flaws and injustices, but their real achievements indicate that reformation is a more fitting response than transformation.

These ambiguously positive assessments of democratic capitalism are characterized by my critics under another name—complacency. But I do not believe that passion for reform needs to be fueled by dramatically unbalanced judgments. Such a stolid attitude probably betrays my social position and implicit self-definition. I fancy myself something of an intellectual of the people and of the laity—the middling men and women in society and church who carry on the day-to-day work of our common existence. Perhaps there is a vestigial bit of that Nebraska spirit in me that drove Roman Hruska, a fittingly anonymous senator from that state, to argue that Harold Carswell should be named to the Supreme Court because mediocrity has as much right to be represented as excellence.

I will give only limited attention to those in the "I Told You So" camp, not because they are not worthy of careful response, but because they share such scant common ground with the commercial republican vision that there is little room for constructive conversation. They are not friendly critics, regardless of how much we need to wrestle with them. Moreover, my book is basically directed toward those implacable critics of market systems, and it is in that book where my arguments are best laid out.

I wish to say only a few brief things about the radical

The self must be nurtured, loved, educated, introduced into civilization by a community of persons—first the family in its nuclear and extended form, but beyond that by friends, school, and church.

critics. First, I find their assessments of American democratic capitalism terribly unbalanced. They tend to play the game unfairly, I believe. They simply lop off all the achievements and exaggerate the evils. Anyone can "prove" this country to be a monstrosity by focusing on the dark underside of American life. But certainly there is much more than that, or we would have more radical politics than we have.

Second, they tend to demonize self-interest in an unhelpful and, I believe, hypocritical way. Any human being possesses a certain power of being that is expressed toward the world through a quest for survival, pleasure, love, friendship, new experience, meaning, achievement, salvation. Every self has a set of interests that are pushed into the world. The market coordinates many of these for the human community in rather remarkable ways. Most of our mutually beneficial exchanges are very routine and uncontentious. No great moral dimensions are attached to them. But business makes the big mistake of being too honest. It talks of profits and returns, and these words have been made to symbolize greed by the "I Told You So" crowd. Meanwhile, however, the "I Told You So" people generally play very well in the market game. (One of the most vocal anti-capitalists in our Chicago neighborhood—a Lutheran pastor—led the local investment club and was, I am told, very good at it.) Moreover, the self-interest expressed in *their* chosen vocations is often disguised under more high-sounding terms like "professional distinction," "service" to this or that institution, the "search for truth," or "fighting for justice." Self-interest is present in all expressions of human being; it need be neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy. We can all admit to it without using it as a moral club with which to beat our ideological opponents.

Third, this camp generally underestimates the reality of the workably competitive markets operating in this country. They are therefore unaware of the expertise, persistence, and discipline it takes to survive in the marketplace. This makes them underestimate how much that market restrains self-interest and bends it to the good of customers and consumers. The "I Told You So" crowd tends to think that the market is a congeries of political clout and privilege; you really don't have to gain success in it the old-fashioned way—by earning it. As one harassed businessman told a theologian after a spirited exchange: "Let's have you start a business and see it through for a couple of years. Then let's come back and see if you make the same criticisms."

Now, having offered a few arguments against those that see a built-in opposition between the market economy and the moral order, let us spend more time in dialogue with the spirit of commercial republicanism, which continues to pervade mainstream economic theory and practice in this country. The "Not To Worry" camp *should* have serious worries, several of which result from its neglect of the moral-social order.

A Non-Historical View of the Self

I started my description of the "Not To Worry" school by reporting the confidence it has that people can be trusted to follow their self-interest in ways rather healthy to themselves and others, if they act them out freely in a market context. They know their own survival needs accurately; they can order them rationally and figure out the prudent ways to get them. The productive apparatus will respond to those preferences, and producers, if held accountable by a competitive market, will supply them well. All of this goes on with little or no guidance from the moral-social order. It operates beneath the moral level.

Such a non-historical view of human beings is a faulty one—it does not account for the moral predispositions it takes to make a market system work effectively on the production side, or the predispositions it takes for persons to select survival values as preferences on the consumption side. In either case, the moral predispositions are the products of communities that form and shape the self. Selves are not exclusively the products of social history, but they are dramatically conditioned by their social context. The self must be nurtured, loved, educated, introduced into civilization by a community of persons—first the family in its nuclear and extended form, but beyond that by friends, school, and church. These communities convey those moral predispositions to developing selves, providing them with a guidance system for both their productive and consuming lives.

There never was such a thing as unbridled capitalism. There may have been times when there were few external limits to developing enterprises, but if Max Weber is right about the connection between Calvinism and capitalism, there was a good deal of Calvinist moral guidance involved in capitalist development. Also, the great medieval Catholic moral tradition operated as a backdrop before which Calvinism could make its revisions. The capacity for promise-making and promise-keeping beyond the tribe was a moral precondition for market systems to develop, and those religious and moral traditions nurtured them.

There is more to say about morality and the productive side of life. But first I want to dwell more intently on the consumption side. The question is this: can persons really register life-enhancing preferences in the marketplace without a healthily functioning moral order, as the "not to worry" people suggest? Or do there exist capacities for real self-destruction?

We are withdrawing the nurturing context from our young. We have nearly abdicated bringing them up. The young are bringing themselves up. And the results are scarily visible all around us.

American society today is a great testing ground for resolving these questions. For I believe we are withdrawing the nurturing context from our young. We have nearly abdicated bringing them up. The young are bringing themselves up. And the results are visible to anyone around young people a lot, such as those employed by colleges and universities.

One of the jarring new experiences I have had in moving from seminary to college comes from the encounter with really unhinged young people. Many faculty are shielded from this experience because they are often the last people the disoriented young will come to. But they *will* come to chaplains and faculty if those persons give off signals of availability and compassion. And the reports I get from these persons are rather alarming: aimlessness and boredom, loneliness, lack of self esteem and purpose issuing in suicidal threats, gestures, and serious attempts. Widespread use and abuse of alcohol and drugs trigger the self-destructive impulses. Not all students are unhinged of course; students from small towns and rural areas seem to fare better than the metropolitans. Traditional culture is stronger there. But among the metropolitan middle and upper-middle educated classes, the news is bad.

Both mother and dad are working and have done so for a long time. Families do not eat, worship, or play together, let alone converse seriously. There are numerous family breakups in the background of these troubled kids. Or deep estrangement issuing in infidelity or an undertow of disaffection. There is a surprising amount of sexual abuse. The churches provide little authority or structured nurture for them; the churches themselves are confused about moral norms. Schools have long since withdrawn from the formation of character and the teaching of ethics; they have a hard enough time with teaching basic skills. Colleges were frightened out of their *in loco parentis* role in the late Sixties and early Seventies. So much for their confidence in inherited standards of excellence and moral virtue. They stand by as students get bombed at mid-week parties and miss classes the next day. Faculty members bemusedly retreat from the din—sometimes called music—and sexual disorder that students bathe themselves in.

What is left? At earlier stages of life television is the teacher; long hours before the tube become the way our young are introduced to the adult world. It is a world of dishonest advertising, galloping consumerism, leering sexuality, stereotyped shadows of human beings, immediate gratification, sexual relations normally unmarked by restraint and long-term fidelity, the glorification of the abnormal and rebellious. Such attempts as are made at portraying the healthy and conventional tend to be sentimental and phony.

Why is this stuff selected out of television market offerings? Why does it sell? Perhaps because there are no serious alternatives; the moral order is on its way toward disintegration. Persons emerging from this chaotic social context will not be productive agents in the world nor will they select noble human values from the offerings that the market provides.

Later on the shaping community becomes the world of peers. High school and college kids lead each other; and by and large it is the blind leading the blind. The kids will tolerate almost anything from their peers because they have little beyond them to make judgments about them. (By the way, please do not take this to mean that Roanoke College has a more serious problem than other schools. I do not believe that is true; in fact, we may be ahead of others by facing up to it more directly.)

Joseph Schumpeter noticed what I am trying to point to back in the early Forties, and he said it so well that I want to quote him at some length. He is talking about the decomposition of the motivational system of capitalism through the socialization of the bourgeois mind, a process that he believed would eventually kill capitalism's motivational roots.

> As soon as men and women [notice his early inclusiveness] learn the utilitarian lesson and refuse to take for granted the traditional arrangements that their social environment makes for them, as soon as they acquire the habit of weighing the individual advantages and disadvantages of any prospective course of action—or as we might put it, as soon as they introduce into their private life a sort of inarticulate system of cost accounting—they cannot fail to become aware of the heavy personal sacrifices that family ties and especially parenthood entail under modern conditions and of the fact that at the same time children cease to be economic assets.

Schumpeter goes on to argue that this kind of cost accounting is most certainly wrong, for:

> The greatest of the assets, the contribution made by parenthood to physical and moral health—to "normality" as we might express it—particularly in the case of women, almost invariably escapes the rational searchlight of modern individuals who tend to focus attention on ascertainable details of immediate utilitarian relevance and to sneer at the idea of hidden necessities of human nature or of the social organism. These individuals ask: "Why should we stunt our ambitions and impoverish our lives in order to be insulted and looked down upon in our old age?" (*Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, pp. 157-158).

We cannot have an adequate moral order without responsible parenthood and family life. We cannot have a functioning market system without a healthy moral order. Economics has a lot to do with that order, and we must worry about it.

Freedom

Our latter-day commercial republicans are big on freedom, and if I read people like Milton Friedman correctly, that is for them the primary value to be preserved and extended. Now I agree with much of their

I would not want to argue that prudential morality is not a powerful reality or that it is unnecessary. It is real and necessary. But it is not sufficient and we are finding that out.

argument, but I think that humans are even more free than they think and their truncated version of human freedom underestimates the capacity for both creativity and sin in their interpretation of human action. This leaves their economic philosophy with a certain blindness toward human will-to-power that operates in all dimensions of human existence, including the economic. They tend to underestimate power relationships in the marketplace.

The commercial republicans *do* know about self-interest in economic life, and they do think it is best disciplined by competition, but there is an intimation that the market can indeed handle that self-interest because prudent reason, when faced by competition, will submit to its discipline. Further, the prudent reason of individuals is projected onto large enterprises. Commercial republicans often argue that corporations are only collections of individuals and that they act like an individual writ large. Thus, this economic outlook tends to be unaware of the driving will-to-power in individual, but especially, corporate economic life.

I quoted Tocqueville earlier to the effect that the commercial classes have little violent political passion because their excitement on small matters makes them calm about great ones. But when economic life is carried on by giants, excitement funneled through those large entities is no longer a small matter. It can overrun other competitors, individuals, governments, whole countries.

Enterprises are not only larger than those of Tocqueville's day, but the human spirit is larger than our economic philosophy assumes and its excitement can be more harmful and evil than expected. That is because human freedom is indeterminate. It is self-transcending freedom that seeks ultimate security but at the same time knows death is its fate. Anxiety is our lot as centers of self-transcendence. But, as Ernest Becker argued, we all are engaged in strategies that deny death. We attach ourselves to winners who for the moment can fend off the overwhelming insignificance and mortality that is ours. The commercial republicans knew this was true of religious and political life, but they didn't think it operated in economic life, because that dealt with milder ambitions and passions.

The story of John DeLorean should dash that fond illusion in individual life, and the story of ITT's behavior in Chile should dash it at the corporate level. Those stories could be multiplied. The point is that indeterminate will-to-power is expressed through economic life, especially in its corporate form, and it will seek to override the restraints of the market or find places where there are no market restraints. Economic power is no less dangerous than political; sin operates there too. And in societies where the church and the polis have been pushed to the periphery by the market as an organizing paradigm, economic will-to-power may be even more dangerous.

What is the upshot of this for the moral order? First, that the moral-social order can provide internal restraints on individuals that the market itself cannot provide. The John DeLoreans will not be deterred by the discipline of the market. Second, the polity, reflecting the values of the moral order, must often be summoned to limit economic-will-to-power in a commercial republic. Economic freedom is more dangerous than the Friedmans of the world maintain, and its restraint must often come from beyond the market.

Prudential Morality

The economic philosophy of latter-day commercial republicanism overestimates the capacity of prudential morality to sustain a market economy. In trying to operate at the low and solid level beneath morality, its moral theory—sometimes called marginal utility theory—is really a kind of ethical egoism. It is prudential morality which, as Immanuel Kant argued, is not really morality in its strictist sense because it engages in right action under threat of loss or hope for gain. Public exposure, loss of customers, disapproval of others, or legal penalties prove counter to one's interest so actions that lead to such results are avoided. Conversely, actions which lead to the opposite are engaged in.

I for one would not want to argue that prudential morality is not a powerful reality or that it is unnecessary. It is real and necessary. But it is not sufficient and we are finding that out. We are becoming more and more aware of two gaps in economic life that are not handled by prudential morality.

The first gap is between what the law says is prohibited and what the law actually uncovers and punishes. In an increasingly complex and massive society, that gap is painfully real. Violent crimes are often unsolved and unpunished. But the myriad of non-violent "white collar" and "boardroom" crimes are even harder to detect and punish. For the most part, crime does pay. Prudential morality is not very persuasive here. If the risks are assessed and found to be less than the benefits gained, prudence may push one toward the illegal.

My conversations with business people over the years convince me that many moral problems arise for them when they are told by their firms to engage in illegal behavior because there is little chance of getting caught. This indicates the failure of prudential morality as it is practiced by the leadership of those firms.

A second gap is that between *legally* and *morally* permissible behavior. For example, it may not be illegal for insurance salespersons to sell highly limited health and life insurance policies to elderly persons who are not

The need for ethically sensitive persons in business is being recognized by our businesses and colleges, but these institutions must build upon character formed earlier by the moral-social order.

aware of those limitations. No doubt the limits are there in the fine print. No doubt, if asked, the salesperson will almost tell the truth. But the fine print is not read and the questions are not asked. And many of these policies are sold. (I myself feel almost helpless before the expertise of a good insurance salesperson.) An authentically moral person would not engage in such selling, but the prudentialist might well.

Both of these gaps illustrate that there must be internal resources in the actor that provide moral guidance. The web of external interactions may not suffice. Moral character must fill these gaps, and that comes only from formation in the moral-social order. Only those persons who act for intrinsic reasons can be trusted in such situations. An executive I know is in charge of deciding whether his firm will enter foreign markets. Many of these markets are in countries where graft is the order of the day; it may even be legal under the laws of those lands. He will engage in some such operations, but he has a set of intuitive limits. As he puts it, "If I start playing with skunks, I start smelling like one, and I don't like myself." He has internal restraint.

We are even more dependent on moral character from beyond the market-place when we look for the generation of moral idealism rather than just moral restraint. Who will be able to imagine a more expansive picture of business responsibility, who will be attuned to the genuine human needs of employees, who will take risks of moral leadership? Certainly not the prudentialists.

The need for ethically sensitive persons in business is being recognized by our businesses, colleges, and universities, but these institutions must build upon character that is formed earlier by the moral-social order.

In summary, I have sought to engage in a friendly argument with the spirit of commercial republicanism, a spirit that has tried to shape economic theory and practice independent of morality. Or at least it has tried to make it less dependent on morality than is warranted. Therefore, it has not worried as much as it ought about the moral order. This fault, I have maintained, stems from its rather non-historical view of human nature, its naturalistic view of human freedom, and its excessive reliance on prudential morality. In short, it does not recognize the indispensability of a healthy moral order. That order forms character toward life-enhancing values and preferences, tames and directs the longings of a free human spirit into constructive channels, and provides an inner set of moral restraints and aspirations.

In order to end with constructive suggestions, I offer the following:

1. Economic theory must be revised to take a more historical view of human nature. The institutionalist school has much to offer here. Likewise, the insights of Marx, without the determinist and dialectical dogma, will be of use.

2. Colleges like ourselves must insist on broad liberal arts education. By that I mean those in the humanities must also study economics, and vice versa. The liberal arts vision of educating the whole person was never more crucial than it is today. Further, faculty on our campuses should be about the kind of dialog that overcomes the centrifugal forces of modern learning.

3. Above all, we must devote ourselves to strengthening the institutions that constitute the moral-social order. We must begin with our families, for that is where formation is most powerful. We simply have to spend more time and energy on nurture. Our schools must be able to engage in moral education that is not narrowly sectarian. Our churches must devote more structured ministry to the young. And our church colleges must encourage and enrich the virtue of those who arrive with it, and initiate it in those who don't.

Emmy

> *And he who sat upon the throne*
> *said, "Behold, I make all things*
> *new."* Revelation 21:15.

Over the cracked bronze clay of Georgia
North to Promised Land's cemented city,
telling dreams and children both, "Endure!",
she fought. While eastward they sat waiting.

Then more of culling gold from Revelation.
More of feeding children dreams, and more
cajoling green from clay left over. Still,
as time ran out, they waited.

First her timid tapping, then the pounding.
Finally her stubborn asking at half-opened
doors. Suddenly, a few who welcomed and,
as promised, all things new.

Oh such hymns she sang while planting gardens!
Oh such flowers stocked the windows! And what
laughing from the house the children did while
painting it Wild Raspberry for their waiting!

Lois Reiner

Taking Movies Seriously

Jeff Smith

Movies seem to be the only topic that gets a conversation rolling as effectively among my academic friends and colleagues as among the folks back home. In fact, once the discussion turns to a recent film, it's hard to tell apart these two usually quite distinct social worlds. Scholastics take to the topic as enthusiastically as non-academic friends and family, who, by the same token, swap judgments about movies as confidently and knowledgeably as do the intellectuals. To break through the pall of polite chatter, whether about Derrida and dissertations on the one hand or church doings, TV, and Aunt Edna's surgery on the other, just mention the latest Hollywood enticement. I can't count the number of times I've seen this work. The most recent was at a lunch with members of a doctoral seminar in American literature; for all their common departmental concerns and weeks of joint reading and inquiry, this group of advanced graduate students, scholars, and literary editors found movies to be the only subject they could discuss with vigor.

An encouraging fact, perhaps, for we happy few specializing in film study, but not for reasons one would likely guess. Because whatever it might seem, the way intellectuals talk about movies is a sign not of an intellectually serious attitude toward film, but of the opposite: a pervasive and persistent *weakness* in the status accorded film by intellectual culture, and not just in idle conversation either. In fact, if we look more closely at such conversation we see merely the shadow of a struggle that has gone on for decades and that goes on still at the very highest levels of film criticism and scholarship. It is a struggle over just how to go about taking movies seriously.

I

Academics in established disciplines normally respect each other's expertise. If they learn you are a specialist in the early Victorian novel (a popular medium in its own time, of course, just like film), any judgments they make on that subject will be carefully marked as "subjective." A comment like "I couldn't stand *Barry Lyndon*" means, "I didn't enjoy reading *Barry Lyndon* but [or even, therefore (!)] would never doubt that, as a Text, it merits your serious attention." (Needless to say, non-academics, also aware that these are matters for experts, are even more circumspect about them and won't normally have even a "subjective" opinion to offer.)

But to identify your specialty as film is to invite the opposite to happen. Here the response might be, "Oh, did you see *Superman III*?" and from that moment no one present will be bashful with opinions. In this context, "I couldn't stand *Barry Lyndon*" means simply, *Barry Lyndon* was a bad, if not worthless, movie, and never mind whether any or all knowledgeable critics disagree about that. In fact, you will have little chance to refer to this body of opinion, since your own knowledge will be mined only for arcana, or inside dope—as though all students of film must naturally be subscribers to *Reel Life*. (People who learn of my own formal training in film typically ask me questions that call less on that training than on what I can remember from the Sunday supplements.) Even more likely you will be asked if you aim to *make* films, a question whose implications should be tediously familiar to most English majors, tired as they are of explaining to non-academics that literary studies aren't some kind of pre-vocational training to write novels. In fact, what becomes clear is that the value of film study as a discipline unto itself is understood by intellectuals about as well as humanistic studies generally are grasped by the public at large.

Partly this may owe to the fact that movies are current and one of the few cultural products held in common, even (or especially) among educated people. Also, it must be said that some distinction still exists between "high" or serious—usually European—film and the standard, mass Hollywood product. But these facts themselves are part of what needs explaining. And anyway, neither point holds up perfectly. The distinction between "art" and Hollywood films is not as carefully honored as, say, that between serious recent writing and pulp fiction. And it seldom seems that other matters of current or common knowledge provoke the same response as the movies. Psychology and linguistics also deal with phenomena we all know, yet experts and laymen in these fields have little trouble distinguishing

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Auteur critics showed that many "hack" directors had actually brought considerable unity of outlook and consistency of style to the "trashy" commercial projects the studios had given them.

each other. And though a historian of the Johnson presidency or a political scientist studying the West Bank might encounter strong opinions touching his or her field, still it always seems that academics hold such opinions conditionally, with a general willingness to acknowledge the legitimacy of the discipline itself and its canons, and above all the possibility of expertise.

It is precisely this acknowledgement that intellectual culture denies film. A literary scholar might be well aware that Faulkner wrote screenplays, and that some of the greatest minds of this century have recorded their appreciation for movies. But he will praise or vilify *Superman III* just as readily nonetheless, and with no apologies for any lack of formal film training. *Superman III* doesn't fall into the same category of conversation as Faulkner. For most academics it's more like faculty gossip or the weather, certainly not something that has to be studied to be discussed. We might be tempted to say that while everybody talks about the movies, nobody ever does anything about them.

II

This half-joking paraphrase might seem easily refuted by the decades of intensive study film has received, not only from film specialists but from some of the most eminent scholars in other disciplines as well. The intellectual world *seems* to have been taking film seriously for some time. By 1934, the year the famous Princeton art historian Erwin Panofsky published his landmark essay, "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures," it was certainly established that movies—not just abstruse, experimental foreign films, but *movies*—might be a fit topic for discussion by leading academics.

Actually, though, this essay tends to reveal the truth of my little paraphrase. We can appreciate Panofsky's boldly arguing, against what he assumed (probably correctly) to be widespread opposition to the idea, that films are indeed art—in fact, one of the few really vital modern arts precisely because of their mass appeal:

> If all the serious lyrical poets, composers, painters and sculptors were forced by law to stop their activities, a rather small fraction of the general public would become aware of the fact and a still smaller fraction would seriously regret it. If the same thing were to happen with the movies the social consequences would be catastrophic.[1]

But in Panofsky's view this cultural vitality was bound up with the fact that movies were a "folk art." Panofsky's way of justifying the movies was to argue that the very qualities that had called their artistic value into question were really the source of their worth. As against an elite art like painting, Panofsky saw movies as being constrained by the demands of the market and the hard, inviolable reality of the objects photographed. This meant that films were "arrangements" of material things rather than projections of some abstract concept in "the artist's mind." And this was their glory. The response of movies to these constraints was to discover their folkish appeal.

Obviously Panofsky's praise was somewhat patronizing; according to Susan Sontag, it paralleled a "vaguely Marxist" condescension toward the movies' "vast uneducated audience." Certainly it did nothing to increase appreciation for the film artist, whose importance in the making of a Hollywood movie Panofsky explicitly denied. This is the sense in which, for Panofsky, talking about film was indeed like talking about the weather, another vital factor in people's lives that no one creates and no one can much affect. Or at best, to use his own analogy, filmmaking was like cathedral-building: the producer is the archbishop, the director the chief architect, and on down the production/construction hierarchy. Something like this view evidently prevailed for many years, judging from the fact that many Hollywood filmmakers were as little known and honored in their time as medieval architects.

The fact that this has changed, and that today critics greatly honor many of those same filmmakers, is largely due to the so-called "auteur" (author) theory that emerged in France in the 1950s. Auteurism was an explicit effort to take the film artist seriously. Rejecting Panofsky's "folk art" way of justifying movies, which essentially denied that a work *needed* a single artist in order to have value as art, auteur critics argued that even Hollywood studio films *did* have artists—usually, their directors—and they were easily able to show that many directors previously considered "hacks" had actually brought considerable unity of outlook and consistency of style to the "trashy" commercial projects the studios had given them. As a result, the canon or "pantheon of film directors" called for by Andrew Sarris, a leading American auteurist, has now largely been established.

In language as bold as Panofsky's, Sarris pronounced the upshot of the new attitude—an attitude designed to close the gap between appreciating Hollywood movies and being intellectually serious about film:

> Like most Americans who take film seriously, I have always felt a cultural inferiority complex about Hollywood. Just a few years ago, I would have thought it unthinkable to speak in the same breath of a "commercial" director like Hitchcock and a "pure" director like Bresson. Even today, *Sight and Sound* uses different type sizes for Bresson and Hitchcock films. After years of tortured revaluation, I am now prepared to stake my critical reputation, such as it is, on the

[1] From the reprint of the Panofsky essay (1947 revision) in Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, eds., *Film Theory and Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Oxford Univ. Press, 1979). Other essays that I cite and that are reprinted in this anthology are: Susan Sontag, "Film and Theatre," 1966; Andrew Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962"; and Pauline Kael, "Circles and Squares," 1963. Italics in all quotes are the authors'.

> proposition that Alfred Hitchcock is artistically superior to Robert Bresson by every criterion of excellence and, further, that, film for film, director for director, the American cinema has been consistently superior to that of the rest of the world from 1915 [to the present]. Consequently, I now regard the *auteur* theory primarily as a critical device for recording the history of the American cinema, the only cinema in the world worth exploring in depth beneath the frosting of a few great directors at the top.

As influential as this view has been, it too had problems. Since they were rediscovering overlooked directors, the auteurists had a tendency (not unlike Panofsky's) to place value on the very limitations and constraints that had led to neglect of those directors in the first place. Unlike Panofsky, the auteurists did credit individual artists rather than "the medium" itself with finding ways around the constraints. But still they took less joy in filmmakers who created or controlled their own projects than in sheep who had been lost and were now found. As Pauline Kael put it:

> Their ideal *auteur* is the man who signs a long-term contract, directs any script that's handed to him, and expresses himself by shoving bits of style up the crevasses of the plots. . . . The director who fights to do something he cares about is a square.

Poor Dostoevsky, Kael mocked, "too full of what he has to say" and "tackling important themes in each work"—if the auteurist "inside dopesters" got hold of literature, he would be discarded in favor of some forgotten hack from the *Saturday Evening Post.*

Today's pervasively auteurist criticism has responded to this charge by evolving a slightly different sort of perversity. If film critics today no longer place value on the fact of constraint, it is because this fact has almost been forgotten. Typically any Hollywood director is now assumed to be an auteur, and his work the outcome of a conscious artistic strategy and vision. Kael's remark that "these critics work embarrassingly hard trying to give some semblance of intellectual respectability to a preoccupation with mindless, repetitious commercial products" seems even more apt with regard to what one reads today in the *Village Voice,* where Andrew Sarris still presides, and in similar trendy journals for the in-crowd of upscale young (which journals, after all, must find ways to take seriously their readers' pop-culture tastes).

But the remark applies as well to the work of countless contemporary film critics. If Panofsky took film art seriously at the expense of the artists, the auteurist mainstream of today tends to take some artists seriously at the expense of the art. It tends overwhelmingly to judge film by self-contained criteria—criteria, that is, derived from and applicable only to film. Such a situation naturally leads either to "inside dope" or to the disease of many newspaper film critics, for whom inchoate personal reactions ("This movie made me feel good") pass as criticism.

An obvious solution would be to develop an approach to film using criteria rooted in some larger scheme of cultural or artistic values beyond film. The best recent film writing has in different ways tried to do this. It has argued that movies must be looked at in just such a larger context in order to be taken really seriously. In his new book on Howard Hawks, a favorite rediscovered filmmaker of the auteurists, Gerald Mast echoes Pauline Kael's complaints about the auteurists and further adds that film theory in general has overvalued the idea of directorial "style" at the expense of film *stories.* If we looked at movies the way we read serious literature, says Mast, we would pay more attention to the story as the real substance of the work and the source of its value:

> Jane Austen's *Emma* is admired as a rich, important human work, not solely for its carefully structured action, deeply and subtly observed characters, and gracefully perceptive writing but for the very depth, ironies, and complexities of the moral system that permeates it. . . . Part of Jane Austen's reputation as a writer can be traced to her ability to construct such a complex and insightful moral universe as her means to elaborate her story of one woman's discovery. The moral and philosophical seriousness of Shakespeare's *Othello* stems from the same source—the elaboration of a rich moral universe through action and character, based on human issues which are enormously complicated and important.[2]

Bringing the same values to bear on the filmmaker in question gives us this simple formula: "To demonstrate that Hawks is of any value is to demonstrate that he told good stories." And in turn, says Mast, this means showing that he conveyed "a view of human life and aspiration that is serious and complex," however little this view calls attention to itself amid the seemingly simple materials of Hawks' popular comedies, Westerns, or war pictures.

Just by feeling he needs to argue all this, Mast confirms the persistent strength of film criticism's self-containing tendency. But in a different way Mast's judgments, too, are self-contained. When it comes to actually analyzing Hawks' films, Mast may be *generally* applying the standards of serious literary study, but he shows little interest in drawing *particular* connections between Hawks' recurring themes and issues and those of the literature or culture of the era. He does little to locate Hawks in *this* kind of larger scheme of intellectual and cultural concerns.

Mast is very good on the "social" history of movies, the history of their changing relations with TV, government, the Legion of Decency, and so forth (his other recent book is the first serious collection of source documents on this subject). But his views on cultural history are limited by his sense that the great artists of all periods, a Shakespeare or an Austen as much as a Hawks,

[2] Mast, *Howard Hawks, Storyteller* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), p. 34.

In analyzing movies, Stanley Cavell frequently writes as though the actors were not tools of an artist but rather real people speaking and behaving without premeditation.

perform essentially the same act; all are just basically great storytellers in touch with universal issues common to all epochs. Mast tells us less, therefore, about the relation of the given artist to the art and thought of an age—why a Hawks in particular chose certain of these issues to deal with in this particular way. Mast means us to take Hawks seriously as a cultural figure; he makes a point of noting that Hawks was friends with "two of the greatest American literary minds of his age," Hemingway and Faulkner, and that therefore "it seems quite probable that those minds accepted Hawks as 'one of us.'" But this scarcely locates Hawks within the larger scheme of twentieth-century thought—that is, in the kind of scheme in which we are accustomed to locating figures like Hemingway and Faulkner.

Of course, any number of studies are published on Hemingway and Faulkner without explicit reference to intellectual history. But it is taken for granted that as serious writers, Hemingway and Faulkner *are* intellectual history. Actually Mast's argument lacks nothing in itself, but we do miss the more explicit connections to intellectual culture given that film art has not yet been accepted as self-evidently a part of that culture. However seriously Mast himself takes movies, it is not clear that his approach will convince academics outside film study to do so.

Perhaps Mast, who was trained in serious literature but has come to teach and write mainly about film, is not the sort of critic to perform this service. And of course we also cannot count on scholars like Panofsky, who leave their established fields only for brief forays into film. Perhaps the best hope would be a scholar who stayed within an established discipline but also made a sustained study of film from that discipline's perspective. We have just such a figure in Stanley Cavell, a Harvard philosopher who writes with equal facility and interest about Wittgenstein and the Cary Grant/Katherine Hepburn screwball comedy. Cavell is able to bring to bear on the latter the profoundest philosophical insights gleaned from studying the former, and the result is criticism that makes movies sound like very serious documents indeed.

For Cavell, to talk about Howard Hawks is to talk not only (as for Mast) about Shakespeare, but also about Kant, Nietzsche, Freud, Hume, Locke, and Matthew Arnold, not to mention empiricism, New Comedy, and "the worldhood of the world"—and very possibly in just that order. To talk film, in fact, is to *do* philosophy. Cavell advocates more rigorous "readings" than are usually done of the "low" or "typical" instances of film art (i.e. Hollywood), not just for their own sake but also because the importance of movies in our lives, and the fact that intellectuals and other folks care about movies in similar ways, are themselves phenomena that deserve explaining. Cavell proposes not just to bring Heidegger into the film curriculum but, when discussing Heidegger, to bring Buster Keaton before the faculty of philosophy:

> My juxtaposition of Kant and Capra [a popular studio director of the Thirties and Forties] is meant to suggest that you cannot know the answer to the question of worthwhileness in advance of your own experience, not the worthwhileness of Capra *and* not that of Kant. . . . I am not, in the case of Capra, simply counting on our capacity for bringing our wild intelligence to bear on just about anything, say our capacities for exploring or improvisation. What we are to see is the intelligence that a film has *already* brought to bear in its making; and hence perhaps we will think about what improvisation is and about what importance is.

This essay, gathered with others last year in Cavell's book *Pursuits of Happiness*, shows not only his characteristic complexity (Cavell teaching us how to look at films philosophically in order to permit them to teach us how they should be looked at in order to confirm what philosophy teaches us about looking at things, etc.); it also indicates what connecting film with serious thought loses for Cavell in terms of the idea of film as serious *art*. The reference to Capra notwithstanding, Cavell tends as much as Panofsky to suppress the role of the artist in his discussions of movies. It is "the film" that brings intelligence to bear, just as he often speaks of "the film's preoccupations" or "the world of the film."

In analyzing movies Cavell frequently writes as though the actors were not tools of an artist but rather real people speaking and behaving without premeditation. (Indeed, Cavell's theoretical writings stress the capacity of film to make us invisible observers of events.) *Pursuits of Happiness* is a "genre" study; Cavell sees the films it discusses as indeed reflecting the serious issues of a given time and culture, and in this respect he is specific about cultural history in the way that Gerald Mast isn't. But Cavell pays for this with his lack of Mast's superior insight into the skill and technique of the artist. In Cavell's handling the several films by various directors become almost one super-film, since each is seen expressing the same set of cultural concerns equally as well as the others. Cavell has admitted that it came as "a clarifying shock to realize that films were directed" at all when the auteurists first made a point of this fact. "I certainly felt rebuked for my backwardness in having grown to fatherhood without really knowing where movies came from." But the shock, instead of moving him to take up an interest in film authors, led Cavell rather to mull over the question of what it is about the nature of movies that allowed so many people to be "backward" in this way for so long.

Cavell's approach to film criticism breaks the self-containment barrier, but it holds the danger of reducing film even below the level of folk art to the level of sheer artifact. Kant and Hume, after all, can be applied to just

It is fine to study film artists' works as folk icons, artifacts, epiphenomena, or universal truths, but in other arts this has been done with the stature of those artists first assumed and assured.

about any mental artifact of Western man, simply because the things they thought about and said inform all of our thinking. Cavell's basic assumption—and here the philosophers among us might recall that he has studied Wittgenstein—resembles a view quite popular in this century, which has seen sophisticated theories applied to every kind of mental product from billboards to nursery rhymes to psychotic fantasies.

Whatever their differences with Cavell in some higher realm of theory, which there is no need to get into here, essentially this same view lies behind the film criticism done in recent years under various "schools" or rubrics —linguistic and semiotic, structuralist, psychoanalytic, Marxist, feminist. On the surface, critics of these schools take the critical task seriously to the point of being humorless or even reproachful. Their aim may be a "scientific" analysis of film, or, what for them is often the same thing, a singularly rigorous application to movies of a *particular* philosophy like Marx's or Freud's. But even when the result is not stilted "technese" or jargon-ridden orthodoxy, in the hands of such critics film tends to remain an artifact instead of an art. And not necessarily (as for Cavell) a socially beneficial artifact at that: the filmmaker is as likely to turn up in such criticism as a henchman of sexual repression, patriarchal dominance, the bourgeoisie, or all of these at once—anything but as an individual whose vision of life demands careful study in terms of its evolution and destiny.

III

I have tried to stress that each of these critics means to take movies seriously, and each has contributed worthily to what ultimately could be a really serious perspective on the subject. But there is a difference between being serious about something and taking it seriously. Swift was hardly serious in "A Modest Proposal," though he took the plight of Ireland very seriously; and on the other hand, as suggested above, a serious analysis of something like a TV commercial can be (and maybe must be) done by someone who would not for a moment take seriously the advertiser's claims. This is why, even though the serious criticism of any art is the sum of various methods and attitudes much like those described above, we cannot yet say that the various approaches taken toward film add up to a situation in which intellectual culture takes film seriously.

With film a crucial premise, implicit in even the narrowest critical study of the "serious" arts, is still lacking. We will not be able to say that intellectual culture really takes film seriously until it comes to treat film art as part of itself, like other arts. And for this to happen scholars must admit filmmakers, the best ones anyway, to membership in that culture, must accord filmmakers the same status that the greatest artists, thinkers, and sometimes scholars themselves are accorded, as creators and not just reflectors of cultural history. For starters, this will mean taking a serious interest, as Gerald Mast does, in filmmakers' actual ideas, but furthermore in how they get those ideas. Whether the answer lies in intellectual or psychological biographies or simply in the books they've read, this question will have to be asked about filmmakers as explicitly as it has long been asked about poets and novelists.[3] It is fine to break down and study artists' works as folk icons, artifacts, epiphenomena, or universal truths, but in other arts this has been done with the stature of those artists first assumed and assured —a condition that has not yet been met in the case of film artists.

A final factor that illustrates as well as aggravates the low status of film is, of course, the university curriculum. Film remains less well-established in the curriculum than is usually supposed. It is only slowly moving through the stage that literary study endured a hundred years ago, when it was not universally agreed that literary judgments could be kept intellectually serious or that literature even constituted the "collective biography of the national mind." According to John Gross, literature had to be "smuggled" into universities disguised as philology,[4] and today we often see film study come in disguised as linguistics (or semiotics). Film study has not reached what Gross calls the stage of "full trade-unionization" that English literature had achieved by 1925, but rather is still practiced even in academe by "men of letters" (and a modern equivalent, the practicing filmmaker) who are segregated from the "real" disciplines in "schools of the arts." (Andrew Sarris, with no more than a B.A., holds forth from a full professorship in such a school as Columbia.[5]) And where it is in the hands of genuine academics, as at the University of Chicago, film is not regarded institutionally with the same seriousness as established studies. One could hard-

[3] An example of this, but obviously not a very characteristic or influential one, is Raymond Durgnat's discussion in *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock* (MIT Press, 1974) of possible Jansenist influences in Hitchcock's childhood. There have also been useful discussions by critics of, say, Zen influences on Japanese directors or Swedish Lutheranism's on Bergman, but then foreign filmmakers have been taken more seriously from the beginning, since critics have the advantage of distance.

[4] Gross's discussion of "Early English" in *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* (Penguin, 1973) suggests all sorts of parallels with modern film study—as when Gross notes the special resistance by Oxbridge to English lit.: "Everything about the subject was suspect: it was modern, it was enticing, it was bound to be the softest of soft options."

[5] The situation may be different in, say, France, where historically closer connections between film and intellectual culture have often been noted. In any case, the problem of professors with B.A.s will be resolved by the year 2000 when one-third the population of the Western world holds the Ph.D.

We can only expect film to come into its own when some filmmaker arises whom the intellectual world regards with the greatest seriousness, initially for reasons having nothing to do with film.

ly graduate from the English department, which harbors film study at Chicago, without studying a novel, poem, and play from each major literary period, but both course and exam requirements permit students to take the Ph.D. without once looking at a film.

Such institutional attitudes undoubtedly contribute to the lack of seriousness my fellow students, at least, bring to movies, and presumably an institutional change in this regard would have a corresponding effect on sherry-hour chitchat. But such change itself will be tardy or ineffectual without a solution to the original problem, the attitude toward film of intellectual culture as a whole. We are still left with the question, When will movies really be taken seriously? It seems to me that there are three conditions under which they might be, hence three ways for movies to achieve first-class citizenship among the arts.

One way (alas, the most likely) is for film as we know it to die out under the onslaught of, say, home video, as some now predict will happen. This would relegate film to the past, neutralize its cultural vitality, and so make it suddenly respectable. It is the same principle according to which classical and Continental authors could be seriously studied before English, and European filmmakers before American—since the former in each case enjoyed what John Gross calls "the academically privileged status of foreigners."

The second and far less likely possibility is that film study be legitimized by some unimpeachable weight of authority, some Great Teacher whose word becomes orthodoxy on a wide range of subjects. It will not do simply to have a Marx or a Freud whose teachings are applied after the fact to every sort of subject including film; I have indicated what sort of polemics that kind of thing tends to give us. Rather, to legitimize film this Great Teacher will have to explicitly affirm its value. What we need is a Plato who, while banishing poets, demands to keep movies in his Republic; or at least a Socrates who will pose the question, "We have films, do we not?" (Gorgias: "Indeed, Socrates. Seen any good ones lately?") A modern Aristotle penning a *De Cinematica* might suffice where simply another Cavell or Panofsky cannot. But to say this is also to indicate why it will not happen. Aristotle was inventing disciplines; in today's climate of specialization new studies must compete at a disadvantage with those already established, and in this match authority naturally weighs in *against* film study. There will be no Aristotle for film because there will be no more Aristotles, and even if there were, it is not clear that film could resist being digested by the Cavellian deep-meanings-are-everywhere assumption that comes so easily to the modern mind.

The last possibility may be the most unlikely and yet, paradoxically, the only one worth hoping for as a practical matter. If Aristotelian authority has disintegrated, well, by virtue of that very fact the modern world nourishes all the more its cult of individual genius. Relying on this fact, we can expect film to come into its own when some filmmaker arises whom the intellectual world regards with the greatest seriousness, initially for reasons having nothing to do with film. This will have to be such a creative mind as the world has never before seen. It cannot simply be a minor intellectual working in Hollywood (like Terence Malick), nor a popular filmmaker with an intellectual bent (like Stanley Kubrick), nor an important artist making the occasional offbeat film (like Samuel Beckett), nor even such an artist writing "serious" scripts for popular films (like Harold Pinter). No, to get movies taken seriously there must emerge a figure whose career in film is no accident, whose success at producing and directing locks in his Hollywood credentials, *and* who in altogether separate artistic/intellectual endeavor attains at least the stature of a T.S. Eliot. (This because of my sense that an artist or thinker must rise at least to this status for the cult of genius to come into full play.) The films of this individual will initially be pored over for the same reasons that the letters, diaries, grade-school notebooks and other relics of geniuses are. But the hope is that the very fact of a genius having taken mass-market Hollywood movies seriously as a medium for personal expression will finally impress itself enough on all the archivists, text editors, dissertation-writers, and other academic train-carriers and true believers to get the point across.

I say "the hope," although the blessing will surely be mixed. As I said at the beginning, it is certainly possible to find today's robust interest in movies encouraging in its very lack of seriousness. A hundred years ago literature likewise permeated culture and was actively discussed; one recent commentator has noted the parallel between the way films are talked about socially today and the way Victorian gentlemen could all be expected to read and talk about the same books. It is not clear that "serious" literature has made an advance by becoming the province of specialists. Specialized discussion is what weighs *down* social gatherings. Intellectuals need popular culture as a realm of things about which they permit themselves and each other to speak without demanding badges of expertise. It would be a shame if movies could not be taken seriously without taking on, like other arts, what Cavell calls "the burden of seriousness." But we will know that just this has happened, and that, as John Gross puts it, the "academic apparatchiks" have taken control, when colleagues look to me (egad) for wisdom on *Superman III,* and when mentioning a movie no longer livens up the party. Until that day, well, hooray for Hollywood.

Computers and the Future of Music Education

Keith Paulson-Thorp

Our culture seems to be perpetually locked into "revolutions," but it is hard to imagine a revolution more compelling and complete than the current revolution in computer technology. New hardware is developed with dizzying speed, and with equal speed becomes obsolete. As musicians, many of us like to feign immunity to the encroachment of modern civilization, yet the day of reckoning cannot be far off. With computers becoming commonplace even in grade schools, and with the challenges of retrenchment forcing most of us to broaden our perspectives, it is no longer reasonable to plan curricula for future generations of musicians and music educators without consideration of this burgeoning technology.

Computers have already made strong inroads in many music departments. Their effectiveness in streamlining administrative procedures has enticed even smaller and more conservative departments to install computers for records keeping and word processing. More moderate (or better endowed) departments explore methods of administering examinations and drills using computers, and at the larger universities use of computers for music composition is a well-established mode of research.

Computer applications in music composition have been available for more than a quarter-century. Two strikingly divergent, yet not mutually exclusive, approaches are found. Some composers have sought to employ computers for the calculation of complex compositional algorithms. In particular, computers afford the composer a much greater precision in determining the probability of particular events occuring in a composition. The precompositional calculations required of the composer can be significantly reduced. One of the first, and most famous, examples of this approach was Lejaren Hiller and Leonard Isaacson's 1957 *Illiac Suite* for string quartet. The details of the score were generated on the Illiac computer at the University of Illinois, Urbana. Unlike in later compositional procedures employing computer calculations, such as the renowned "stochastic" music of Iannis Xenakis, in the *Illiac Suite* stylistic restraints were not prescribed by the programmer, but were generated randomly by the computer.

Many composers have felt that relegation of detail to the operations of a computer is a rejection of a necessary compositional responsibility and have chosen to concern themselves more with computer generation of sounds than with computer generation of compositional programs. For years, the sounds attainable from a computer lacked the depth and versatility of those generated by analog synthesizers (such as those manufactured by Moog, Buchla, etc.), but there is no longer reason to expect that computers in the year 2000 will not be capable of producing with stunning precision virtually any sound imaginable. While the programs required for good sound generation are almost prohibitively complex, as the state of the art develops even this obstacle can be expected to disappear.

Obviously, composers constitute only a fraction of the music community. Performers have become interested in computer technology as a means of real-time sound generation. This development has been much slower in coming than have compositional applications. It was, in the past, necessary to store a music either in the form of a program stored in computer memory to be entered at a terminal, or one to be realized in final form and stored on magnetic tape. Such canned versions of music leave little space for performer interaction. By the end of the current year, several companies will have taken strides to remove this obstacle with the introduction of two Apple-compatible systems, Alpha Syntauri and Soundchaser, and one manufactured by Commodore for its computers. These hardware modules entail multivoice keyboards (with up to sixteen voices) which operate in conjunction with computer control terminals. The computer, with its phenomenal sophistication of control capability and memory, will be as accessible to performers as are the portable analog synthesizers that have proliferated in the popular music market during the past decade.

While the applications cited above may affect the activities of composition and performance, they do not directly affect music education. While the tools might be different, the tasks involved are the same types of

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Some researchers have suggested that the understanding of how our minds process information as abstract as that involved in music listening may be the key to artificial intelligence itself.

musical activities with which we have always dealt, namely construction, labeling, and execution. As such, the changes implied are superficial, for if computer technology is to have a significant impact on music as a whole, it must have some contribution to make to the way in which we understand a piece of music and the way in which we educate others to understand music. The most far-reaching implications of computer applications in music may come in the area of instruction, and from insights garnered in research into artificial intelligence. Some researchers have gone so far as to suggest that the understanding of how our minds process information as abstract as that involved in music listening may be the key to artificial intelligence itself.

At present, the field of computer-assisted instruction in music is at an embryonic stage. There are several reasons for this. The first concerns the complexity of programs required for the generation of musical sounds and music graphics. While this complexity has attracted many computer enthusiasts with its challenge, it has been necessarily limited in the degree of complexity of musical examples produced. Another problem is more fundamental, and concerns the lack of precision with which most musicians approach the intellectual processes of their craft and the inability of theorists to develop and implement realistic models of musical competence from which experimental programs might be developed.

Many larger computer firms have developed programs to assist in music instruction. Some of these companies have focused on the design of self-contained and highly specialized units. One of the most impressive of these machines is the *Exercette* computer manufactured in Canada. In place of the standard typewriter (ASCII) keyset, the *Exercette* is equipped with a touch-sensitive grid and a small LED read-out. The student places a cardboard screen over the grid, which identifies the functions performed by the remaining grid areas. The tasks which a student may attempt involve most of the simpler cognitive skills stressed in the first year or two of a college ear-training curriculum, skills such as elementary interval recognition, chord quality and short chord progression identification, etc. A few more complex chord structures, such as dominant and diminished seventh chords, are included as the student progresses. The sound quality of the machine, though obviously electronic, is quite adequate and the examples played sound clearly and recognizably.

The *Exercette* is very useful in the flexibility of pacing it allows. A student may ask to have an example repeated as many times as necessary, and for harmonic examples he may at any time request to have the tonic chord sounded for the key in which the example is functioning. Such repetitions may prove annoying to more advanced students in a classroom situation, but on an individual basis, they can reduce frustration and improve confidence for less gifted students.

The drawbacks of the *Exercette* are common to most essays in music instruction. While the examples may, in themselves, be of general practical value, it is impossible for the computer to simulate an actual listening experience. The discontexted and isolated nature of the exercise may preclude the transference of skills developed to more realistic contexts. In traditional ear-training, for example, professors have often found that students become so accustomed to the sound of dictation played at the piano that the students' success factor drops alarmingly when they are asked to identify structures played on other instruments. Even if a student can recognize short examples at a computer, there is no guarantee that he will recognize the same structure embedded in a Mozart symphony.

Second, while the student may be learning to apply labels and visual forms to sound structures, he is not gaining experience in understanding the functions of those structures in actual pieces of music. A simple chord progression may be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on context. Its significance in a Haydn sonata is far different from the significance of the same progression found in a basically atonical work. Simple recognition does not imply intelligent interpretive understanding.

Many mainline computer companies have concerned themselves with developing software that will allow students to perform ear-training drills at standard computer terminals. Apple, Commodore, and TRS all have music-oriented software of one type or another. These have an advantage over the self-contained music units in that they use a standard ASCII keyset and are capable of being programmed as well as of performing myriad non-instruction-oriented tasks. Nonetheless, this flexibility comes at a slight disadvantage, for the keyset mechanism requires the student to enter his responses in what is essentially a non-musical code, thus adding another step to the identification process. (On the *Exercette,* standard musical symbols appear above the grid areas that must be activated for the response.) This is no small matter when one considers the ease with which students become bored or frustrated when dealing with difficult and disagreeable tasks. The extra time required for translation from musical to alphanumeric values may be just enough to discourage the anxious student.

Of the computers mentioned above, the Apple is the most interesting, not because of superior performance or expandability (for all of the machines cited are roughly comparable in this regard), but because of the breadth of software available for use in the Apple com-

If we do not demand precision of thought from our students (and from ourselves) when speaking about music, how can we reasonably expect logical decisions regarding interpretation to ensue?

puter. While most of Apple's competitors have retained licensing and marketing rights for compatible software, Apple has allowed compatible software for their computers to develop on an open market, thus taking advantage of an abundance of creativity at large. Numerous companies now specialize in various Apple-compatible softwares (the most notable of these for musicians being Micro Music Inc.), and several universities have developed exceptional Apple-compatible software which may be available for distribution in the near future. Such flexibility is not without its price, however, for Apple has remained comfortably aloof from the recent price wars that have brought the cost of home computers within the budget of the masses. A single Apple terminal with the necessary disk module, display module, etc. will run at least two thousand dollars. Considering, however, that the *Exercette* is in the same price range but without the flexibility of the Apple system, this is not really out of line.

Most of the software available from these larger companies involves the same basic cognitive tasks available on the self-contained units as well as tasks dealing with vocabulary identification (particularly of foreign terms), and even programs which enable the user to devise elementary tunes. While one might be easily impressed with the sophistication of the graphics and sound available in this software, one must still wonder if there is not more that computers may be able to offer musicians.

The ultimate determination of how we may wish computers to contribute to music education will hinge on our ability to discern more precisely how it is that humans learn to interpret musical information. Until we know how the musical mind is programmed, we will not be able to program computers to assist in any truly efficient way. Such concerns would have seemed totally irrelevant only a few decades ago. We have usually been content to churn out musical sounds and scores and to label them with much the same mindless alacrity as that with which a butcher might stuff and market sausages. The success of our endeavors depends largely on the snob appeal our services may afford and on the mystical aura in which we so carefully enshroud our work.

The president of a major New York conservatory recently claimed that the job of his institution was to teach students to do, not to enjoy, music. Such insistence on music as a physical rather than a mental activity is rampant, and is ultimately stifling to music as an art. It is arguable, moreover, that people seldom excel at those things which they do not enjoy, and that they seldom enjoy those things which they are unable to understand. The interpretation of sounds as music, after all, occurs in the brain, where musical sounds are detached from the larger body of current perceptions and filtered through our individual repertoires of remembered musical experience. We may conjecture that an increased awareness of the mental aspects of musical processing may actually contribute to a much more direct and complete experience of music rather than to any destruction of musical sensitivities (i.e., visceral responses) as is often supposed. At a time when music programs are subject to major budget cuts, and have been completely deleted at many schools, we must find ways of drawing music into the larger spectrum of human understanding and of restoring academic respectability within the profession.

A representative of a major computer firm recently remarked that his company's interest in the development and marketing of music software was impeded by the fact that musicians themselves could not agree on important issues. As a result, programs are usually restricted to those which deal with more absolute components such as interval and triad quality identification. Unfortunately, much music education fails ever to go beyond these lower level processes. This avoidance of intellectual concepts arises from the general opinion offered above that such concepts are not germane to music (or that musicians are not mentally equipped to handle difficult concepts) and is then evidenced by a lack of precision in musical terminology. Precision by no means implies that we must adopt a universally acceptable vocabulary, but rather that terms, when they are employed, must be carefully defined for a given application. In order to function logically, a definition must be of the form "A if and only if B" where reciprocity is explicit. Musicians often allow sets of attributes or circumstances to function as definitions.

For example, while works which might be categorized as "artistic" may evoke an emotional response, it is not true that all things which elicit emotional responses are "artistic" in nature. Sufficient data has not been expounded to create a definition, and the criterion of emotional response cannot adequately serve to define what is meant by "artistic." Such meaningless usages abound in musical parlance. If we do not demand precision of thought from our students (and from ourselves) when speaking about music, how can we reasonably expect logical decisions regarding interpretation to ensue? Too often musical decisions are rooted in the assumption that if things have always been done, or seem to have been done, in a given manner, then they must necessarily always be done in that manner. Reevaluation of traditional approaches is not attempted. Precision of terminology can open for students new modes of thought and inquiry which will expand their musical perspectives and stimulate creative approaches to listening and performance. Students can be challenged to question the way they have labeled and examined musical structures in the past.

Those who are able to think and make decisions rationally, rather than on the basis of primitive reactions, will be the ones who will carry the music profession into the next century.

Terminology is but the tip of the iceberg, for precision of thought requires not only a finely honed vocabulary, but also a solid foundation in logic. In music, more than one logical system is required if we are to understand what we are doing. While classical truth-functional logic may apply in the manner in which we define and apply terminology, there is much evidence to suggest that logical modalities (i.e., necessity/possibility, obligation/permission, etc.) are required to explain the manner in which we actually make sense of music in time. What is needed is a music curriculum which combines the essentials of music with the essentials of logic, and which demonstrates the close correlation between the two. A pioneering effort in this direction has been made possible by the recent work of Jos Kunst at the Utrecht Institute for Sonology. Kunst, in his treatise *Making Sense in Music* (Utrecht, 1978), has developed a methodology for applying logical modalities to the analysis of musical processing. His theory has the advantage of being able to incorporate analytical procedures specific to virtually any harmonic, rhythmic, or melodic system. Kunst's ideas may eventually lift musical thought out of the quagmire of more popular Schenkerian and set-theory approaches to music that have consistently reached dead ends.

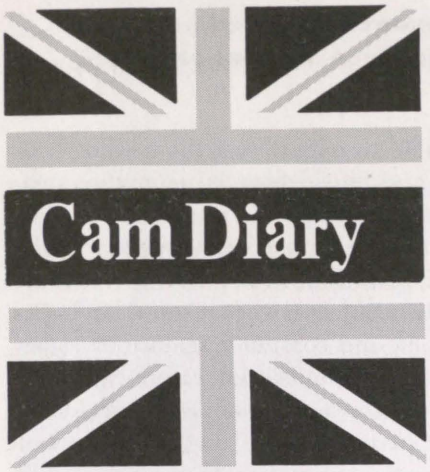
There are two ways in which computers may assist us in attaining this desired fusion of materials. The first approach would delegate the teaching of basic labeling tasks to computer-assisted instruction, thus removing from professors the burden of dealing with black and white concepts and freeing them for more concentration on the application of logical processes in actual works of music. The realization of this approach would be in sight only if the majority of college teachers would be willing to retrain. The second approach would patently incorporate logically-based concepts within computer-assisted instruction. By this method a more standardized approach would result which might avoid some of the difficulties created when professors are ill-equipped to deal with intrinsically non-musical materials. Computers, moreover, have the advantage of being able to respond interactively to individual problems, and of offering enlightening commentary when a mistake is made, in a way that is difficult to ensure in a classroom situation. Each student's progress and areas of weakness can be closely monitored and recorded.

Obviously, if we are to develop software which will fuse music, logic, and related sciences into a cohesive whole, we cannot leave sole responsibility for program design in the hands of computer specialists, but must diversify into those areas ourselves. We have long been willing to accept the formulations of amateur musicians, many of whom have not had sufficient experience to have disposed of naive preconceptions, while we sit idly by. We should be able to expect that those who write music commentary and music-oriented computer programs have adequate training. We must likewise not permit ourselves to delve into complementary fields without adequate preparation, even when those fields become indispensible to our own work. Courses in logic, mathematics, acoustics, and computer science must become a standard part of a music educator's training.

Music majors tend to be a xenophobic lot, jealously guarding what they perceive to be the uniqueness of their art and resisting the temptation to explore. Music is one of the few majors where a minor outside of the principle field is not required. Because of the enormous load of courses required for most music degrees, there would be little time for development in other disciplines even if a student were so inclined. When courses in the sciences are required, students are left to choose from a bewildering array, not knowing which courses might be most pertinent to their major field. What is worse, most departments have designed courses to provide non-majors with a painless fulfillment of general requirements. Seldom are these classes worthwhile. If the sciences were introduced in a meaningful way as part of the music curriculum, students might be better prepared to select the most useful courses in fulfilling their general requirements. In addition, we might find means for preparing students for a wider variety of career possibilities in a discipline which mercilessly pigeonholes those who enter it, and which has long suffered from a shortage of jobs.

If computers cannot pose a complete solution to the problem of curricular integration in music, they at least present some interesting options as well as the opportunity to try new directions. In solving existing problems, new ones invariably arise and challenging solutions are demanded. The rapid acceleration of this cycle in music is not unprecedented, but it is certainly unusual.

In adapting education to the waves of future students who will have been weaned on computer technology, the greatest challenge is to those of us who must ourselves, after years of studying music, become students once more in foreign disciplines. In accepting this challenge, we may be better prepared to challenge our students to train their minds as well as their fingers. We may discover that we can teach students to educate themselves in an ongoing process that does not come to a screeching halt when diplomas are dispensed. Participation in music, whether as a composer, performer, or listener, is a continuous decision-making process. Those who are able to think and make decisions rationally, rather than on the basis of primitive reactions, will be the ones who will carry the music profession into the next century.



The Reformation Personality

Richard Lee

A sabbatical happily allows a little time for reading outside one's field, so I recently read my University's catalog from cover to cover. As one of my Cambridge students had cautioned me, it is everything you ever wanted to know about Valparaiso University but were afraid to ask. On the last page is this provocative statement summing up all that we are and are doing:

> . . . a growing and maturing private University of academic excellence operating within the Lutheran tradition, whose purpose is the development of an effective Christian personality that will leave its mark throughout society.

Setting aside slight problems of syntax, the statement seems to me unexceptionable. I find nothing amiss in the University having psychological designs upon its students as long as it is frank and open about what is obviously a dangerous business, the "development" of other people's personalities. Such a statement, however, must be followed by the most important question ever asked within the Lutheran tradition—the venerable catechetical question "What does this mean?"

That there is a "Christian personality" appropriate to "the Lutheran tradition" I have no doubt. I also think it exceedingly difficult to say what that personality is, much less what an "effective" one might be. But if difficult questions are the only ones worth asking, then the question of the Reformation personality is surely worth meditating on in this month's sabbatical diary by the gentle River Cam.

Near the 500th anniversary of his birth, I think it no discredit to Luther to say at once that his personality is not the personality we mean, partly because his personality is so embedded in late medievalism but mostly because no one person can be the type of the Reformation personality. It has long been a consolation of the Lutheran tradition that one need not be like Luther to be Lutheran. Our question seeks a type, not an historical model.

The answer likely lies in what the Reformation did to the very conditions of personhood. Like it or not, the Reformation uprooted personhood grounded in the natural, tribal, semi-Pelagian religion of the late medieval world. When one visits the monuments and artifacts of that world here in England, for example, one is struck by how commonsensical and communal that religious world must have been for each person. His apparent virtue was confirmed, his apparent vice shriven, and a whole community, including a sacramental God, could help pull him through his life toward the salvation of his soul. Perhaps no doctrine sums up the situation of medieval personhood better than the gentle doctrine of purgatory. Even beyond death a person could be helped by his family, the Blessed Virgin, and all the saints. In life and death you never walked alone, and the religious demands upon you were always more or less tolerably within your means and those of your community.

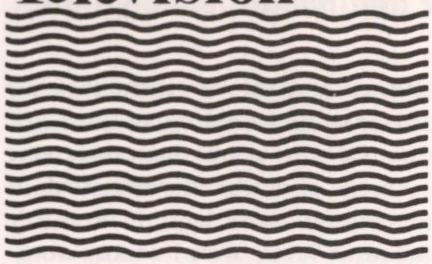
The Reformation countered these commonsensical and communal conditions of personhood and set each person more individually before God and under the most awesome claims concerning both the depths of his sin and the grace of God in Christ for him. It is as if each person were snatched out of the chorus to sing solo or plucked from the human pyramid of mutual support to walk the high wire alone. According to Luther, each person must now do his believing by himself as he must do his dying by himself.

Luther possibly overstates the case, for a Christian's death (like his baptism) is still done within the whole cheering company of heaven and beside Christ going before him, but the individual accountability of each soul before God cannot be denied as the religiously constituent part of the Reformation personality. That personality is grounded *sola* upon the audacious Reformation claims concerning both the absolute judgment and the total grace of God, and the way of faith for each soul is now necessarily through the crisis of doubt because of the very audacity of those claims. The Reformation upped the ante of personal doubt even as it raised the bid for personal faith.

Insofar as religion is one of the conditions of personhood, the Reformation personality is probably inclined toward skepticism about everything short of God Himself, some distrust of sweet reasonableness, a tendency to see communities formed by individuals (rather than the reverse), a disposition to see life constituted in critical decisions (rather than process), and a certain grave joy taken in one's vocation. We all know the possible aberrations of this personality type, but given the range of possible human personalities it is not the worst one. My University apparently considers some such personality a desirable one to develop in its students. Certainly students receive fair warning that such is the University's purpose, although everything in the catalog "is for information only and does not constitute a contract between the student and the University."

The next question—how the University actually develops such a personality, particularly so as to "leave its mark throughout society"—would seem to me a question to occupy many minds far better than mine for a long, long time.

Television



Women In the News

Christine Craft's Case Highlights Some Problems And Hides Some Others

James Combs

Women are in the news—in more than one sense. Women are news, and women in the news are news.

Women are in the news. I mean that in both senses: women are news, and women in the news are news. In the former instance, we now have much discussion—and rightly so—about the attitudinal and electoral "gender gap" between men and women. The gender gap is virtually unprecedented, and it makes politicians uncomfortable because it introduces yet another joker into the deck of election returns. Consider this: in the August national polls, President Reagan had the approval rating of about 51 per cent of adult males, but had dropped eight more points among women, with only 34 per cent of adult females approving him.

Males and females seem to divide sharply on a wide variety of issues. And women are now more likely than ever to vote (they are registering in heavy numbers), and to vote independent of the opinions of significant males (father, husband, brother) in their lives. Reagan doesn't help himself with some of his ill-considered offhand remarks, but then perhaps no politician could totally please women activists of whatever ideological stripe. We are simply living in an age of rising expectations among women, and those expectations—jobs, careers, government services, political recognition, and vaguer things such as independence and fulfillment—may outrun the ability of politicians to deliver. There is even among some women (on both Right and Left) considerable distrust of all male politicians (and maybe even of males in general, which I must admit is probably not totally unwarranted), since they don't "really understand."

If it is the case that we live in an age of the politicization of the battle of the sexes (including homosexual politics), then we are faced with a new dimension of the age-old struggle of men and women to understand, get along with, and even in a few notable cases genuinely to love each other. Men and women are, after all, physical and emotional mysteries to one another, and to the extent that relationships between them are complicated by considerations of power, the mystery—and the alienation—is compounded. I have recently heard both young women and young men seriously say that they doubt that a simple, happy, and lasting relationship between the sexes is possible any more: men and women have conflicting and irreconcilable expectations, don't trust each other, see the other as a threat to their identity, and so on. Contemporary men, for example, will often say that they just don't know what to expect of women these days; not knowing, they shy away, are suspicious and uncertain, and fearful of commitment. Many women may well experience the same thing. Such people are casualties in the sexual revolution, victims of historical change in the role structures of society.

Still, such periods of sexual role redefinition are exciting (if puzzling), invigorating (if exhausting), and probably all in all beneficial (if sometimes individually destructive). In historical change, somebody always gets hurt. The victims are those lonely and confused souls who don't know any more what to make of the opposite sex. But there are also all those bright and suddenly ambitious women who will make their mark on the world, and who have also managed to negotiate more satisfying relationships with men. Since times of abrupt change aren't easy, it is quite understandable that people split badly over what should be done, both individually and socially. If individual men and women can't work out their differences (over, for example, household duties), imagine how hard it is to get any consensus on social policy: abortion, equal rights, political representation—the list is endless.

The basic individual and political question is, how should women be treated?

The basic individual and political question is, how should women be treated? One assumes that most women want to be treated humanely and equitably, but that still doesn't answer the question. And since the question is under considerable dispute, symbolic cases arise—in conversation and the mass media—which illustrate the conflict and the choices involved in the argument. Robert Frost went to the root of the drama when he remarked that people can't figure things out for themselves; they have to see them acted out by someone first. When we see a palpable and immediate case symbolizing and summarizing something that's on our minds, that lets us flesh out what is going on and what we think ought to be done about it. We can see how the country divides up, and how paradoxical and agonizing our choices are, when the mass media enact for us a symbolic drama involving female equality.

How should Christine Craft have been treated? Christine Craft, you

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The most obvious dilemma for news stations involves their freedom to fire or demote newspersons if they become unpopular or, for that matter, simply older.

will recall, is the television newswoman who was demoted at KMBC-TV in Kansas City because the owners, a media conglomerate called Metromedia, did audience surveys which concluded that she was frumpily dressed, opinionated, and lacked "warmth and comfort"; the station's news director told her she was "unattractive, too old, and not deferential to men" (presumably those on the show). She sued, contending that she was hired for her journalistic skills, not her sex appeal, youth, fashionability, or feminine deference to the male "leaders" on the news show. She won, gaining $500,000 in damages, $375,000 of which was back pay. She had made a convincing case that Metromedia had hired her under false pretenses, had practiced sex discrimination, and had violated equal pay laws. How far-reaching the case will be, both in the media industry and without, is unclear, and there may be appeals. But the Craft case causes much handwringing and reflection.

The most obvious dilemma for news stations involves their freedom to fire or demote newspersons if they become unpopular or, for that matter, simply older. The Craft case reminds us that TV news is cosmetic in several senses, not the least of which is that the news is usually read by pretty faces, male as well as female. Flip around the channels in competitive media markets, and look at all that blow-dried hair, those cleft and youthful male chins, squared shoulders, and athletic builds: how many ugly men do you see on local news programs? Or think of all those stand-ups before a Minicam at city hall, an accident, or a political rally by all those young women who look like they just stepped out of the pages of *Glamour* magazine. Some are the graduates of journalism schools, some not; some are intelligent, some not; some are competent, some not; but nearly all are photogenic, and groomed for the part. To speak of "journalistic skills" in a visual entertainment medium is almost ludicrous, given the state of the art—and the audience—of TV news. The Craft case was, to be sure, a particularly blatant one, but not atypical of what TV news is all about. Unlike Craft, most TV newswomen —and newsmen—are willing to play the game according to the conventional rules.

The game is both a lucrative and glamorous one for those who play it well. Craft's back pay should give us some clue, but listen to this: local TV news and weather people in large media markets are paid more than Presidents, more than the heads of many large corporations, more, even, than their own bosses at the station or company. Half a million dollars and more a year is not uncommon for anchors at such stations. Yet the stations contend that it's worth it: getting the right "formula" for TV news in Houston, Chicago, or New York means millions in advertising revenue. Metromedia clearly had something other than journalistic skills in mind when it wanted Christine Craft to groom her appearance. That such practices are sexist (it works both ways: handsome men attract female viewers) is indisputable; but then that wouldn't be the first time that greed won out over humane, or even professional, values. In such a cynical and manipulative world, the ethical question that women, and men, are nagged with is, what am I willing to do for money, fame, power, and ambition? How do I retain my integrity in a world of cosmetic values? How should I be treated?

It is true that TV news practices are counter-balanced by other factors, such as the constant criticism they get (from such as me) for the frivolous and idiotic aspects of news programming. But remember the dilemma they are in: no matter what the law, critics, or journalism school rhetoric says, they are still stuck with attracting and holding an audience that may not share the values and concerns of elites. The system does not always work against women's interests. There are a lot more women in TV news now than there used to be because people want to see women deliver the news. Local stations, for example, have dramatically increased the number of women anchors over the past decade; women now routinely cover the big network beats (the White House, the State Department); and more women than ever before get sent out on important and dangerous assignments. And how many local stations still have weather girls?

The Craft case, then, points up many of the complications and choices concerning the treatment of women in the media business. There is something else we should remember as well. The Craft case illustrates the extent to which TV news is concerned with itself. The mass media is very self-conscious, aware of its own power and glamour, and fascinated by stories that concern news people. The symbolic drama of Christine Craft drew much press and TV coverage (lead stories on each of the three evening network shows, discussions on talk shows among network newswomen, op-ed columns in major newspapers). And perhaps Craft does symbolize a victory for female equality.

Yet the coverage given the Craft story illustrates the very point she was rebelling against: the extent to which the mass media will focus on a story involving elites, involving a "sexy" (the pun is intended) issue, involving a symbolic drama about glamourous people (like Christine Craft)—celebrities living in the world of publicity, media values, and, yes, cosmetics. When celebrities enact a symbolic drama, we are given the illusion that the issue is now resolved, that now sexist or simply unfair treatment of women at

The handsome people you see on TV news occupy a very different world from the wretched of the earth.

work will end. The case of Christine Craft fascinates the news media, but what does it have to do with the lives of ordinary women?

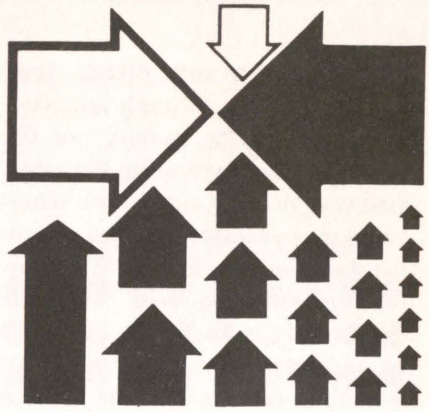
It is likely that most women who work, on or off camera, in the major media organizations in this country are in favor of female equality and fair treatment. But from my point of view, the Craft case obscures the real issues concerning American women, diverting our attention from the problems that beset ordinary folks. Most women—like most men—are indeed ordinary, and are beset with the mundane concerns of the uncelebrated world—scratching out a living, raising the kids, getting adequate day care, working at two jobs, putting up with spouses and ex-spouses. The great inequality of local, and in some measure, network TV news is not gender, it is class: there simply is very little coverage of the people on the bottom. The "class gap" means, for one thing, that the problems of minority and poor women get little coverage. Are largely middle-class audiences, and the people who create the news, just not interested in the problems of, say, Chicano women working in sweat shops for starvation wages in El Paso? Probably.

The cheerful and handsome people you see on TV news occupy a very different world from the wretched of the earth. And they likely share the conclusion that media consultants regularly pass on to local stations: people don't want too much bad news, and the plight of women coping with hunger, dispossession, beatings, and unemployment is bad news. So their fellow women are erased, omitted from the mediated reality over which they preside nightly. Media celebrities such as newswomen are interested in portraying the problems of women they can understand, so the Craft case becomes a natural. The problems of an unnamed Chicano woman in El Paso do not. We are unequal in many ways, including celebrity.

It is likely that women will largely gain respectful and fairly equal treatment in the media business in the years to come, if for no other reason than that they will focus much media attention on the problem. But the real question will be, how much attention will the women in the media focus on other women in the media, and how much will they focus on the vast number of women *not* in the media? Which women are news? In the struggle for female equality and dignity, who is important? The danger is that classes of women will be forgotten by the media contemplating itself as the center of the universe. Women in the media are caught up in the star system, and are in danger of forgetting those "journalistic skills" of which Craft spoke in favor of a symbolic drama of which the media people themselves are the stars, not those unnamed millions of women whose problems and concerns the media has the responsibility to depict. When ordinary women watch the news, what do they see of themselves?

Perhaps they do not want to see themselves, preferring glamourous women and stories. But if "journalistic" values are important, then does TV news have the responsibility to look at the question of how women, and not just media women, should be treated? Or are we moving more and more into the "Ken and Barbie" school of news reporting, with the temptation of media narcissism more and more yielded to? We shall see. But there are already auguries: after winning her case, Christine Craft announced to the world that she would now be involved in the production of a made-for-TV movie about her life, with a well-known movie star already cast to play her. So far as I know, there is no production under way involving a woman who works in a sweat shop in El Paso.

The Nation



Women Who Shouldn't Exist

How Hard-Won Victories Get Taken for Granted

Alan Graebner

Like my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandfather before me, I teach at a midwestern institution of higher education. Unlike them, however, I teach at a Roman Catholic college for women. What my great-grandfather, who was convinced Leo XIII was a threat to American liberty, and what my grandfather, who in his youth also taught Minnesota (albeit Norwegian Lutheran) women, would say about my situation is something for which I await eternity with fitting patience.

In the meantime I spend much of my professional life trying to understand, and to help students appreciate, the history of women in this country. Every spring term we begin in the early seventeenth century and by May have come to the early

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College for women was unthinkable because people knew that the fairer sex does not reason, it intuits. Women, it was commonly assumed, do not think; they feel.

1980s. It is an interesting four months, this trip through four centuries; neither the scenery nor the perspective are ever quite the same. Each year there is more (both scholarship and years) to get into a term that stays the same length. My fellow travelers change as well. A decade ago I could conclude with a few verbal nods at women's liberation, but to students born in the year Friedan wrote the *Feminine Mystique,* that and the New Left have now to be as carefully explained as the legal system of the colonies.

The female college students of today contradict the best informed expectations of the nineteenth century.

So I found myself during the concluding week of last spring's term, puzzling over how I should try to pull things together for the final lecture. Appalled at the number of topics still left untouched, I turned to the time-honored strategy of trying to define what the students most needed to know. To do that, of course, one must define carefully who the students are.

As I pondered that matter, I suddenly realized they are all wrong, these students. They are pleasant women, mostly from middle-class homes in the Upper Midwest. They come to class un-selfconsciously dressed in jeans and shirts. They are at least mildly interested, polite and respectful—often too much so. With varying degrees of efficiency they take notes during lectures, and do the readings. We have some discussions that barely get off the ground, and others that arouse intense participation; but in both cases rationality is the rule. The students take the exams and most of them pass, some brilliantly. Their grades get posted to their transcripts, along with grades from all manner of courses in the sciences as well as the arts, certification wherewith to apply for jobs and graduate school. In late May the students with sufficient seniority graduate and go on the mailing list of the college alumnae office. In due course, most of the alumnae write back with news of jobs, marriages, and children.

None of this is unique these days. But by the standards of an earlier day, all of it is wrong. These women I teach ought not exist. In practically every particular I have mentioned, my students contradict the best informed expectations of the nineteenth century and before. Until relatively recently, the most respected opinion of the day knew that the idea of a college-educated woman was ludicrous, and the idea of a college woman with career more preposterous still. College for women was unthinkable because people knew that the fairer sex does not reason, it intuits. Women do not think; they feel. Women who voluntarily leave the home unsex themselves. They might just as well wear trousers to prove they are certainly no longer women. Their hands, feet, and facial features lose feminine delicacy. Girls who try to study in college doom themselves to sterility, if not permanent invalidism and early death. Anyone who manages to graduate nevertheless has thereby lost the very feminine qualities her schooling was to support and has clearly rejected men, marriage, and children.

Reading such opinions, my students—those who by these expectations ought not exist—are usually more puzzled than outraged; we are, after all, no longer in the Seventies. The beliefs are so outlandish that students often try to make sense of them in ways that I have learned to warn against. One way to explain the ideas is to assume these views arose from the lunatic fringe; there have always been crazies who said bizarre things. But in fact the people who voiced this advice were sober folk who pondered the state of society in a concerned and conscientious way. They were the sort of public-spirited citizens who one day would read *In Luce Tua.*

Another way I see some students treating these opinions is to view them as comic and thus benign. After all, our great-grandmothers lived apparently satisfied and productive lives without access to college. Fortunately historians are allowed a sense of humor; they may laugh as well as weep over the misplaced cer-

Education was not simply novel, but an ominous threat to the family, the state, and the natural order.

tainties of the past. And yet to treat those assertions of the past as benign is to assume that unless the victim screams there is no victim. Is not the employee whose pension fund is secretly embezzled robbed whether or not she realizes it?

A still more common temptation is to assume these people in the past did not really mean what they were saying. They were somehow only actors in a period-piece drama repeating lines given to them. Secretly they knew better. The naivete of this interpretation would be charming if it were not so arrogant. Of course those people in the nineteenth century meant what they were saying. For them the college women we take for granted were inconceivable, not in the sense of being unimaginable, but in the sense of being a tragic mistake. To fail to comprehend that inconceivability is to distort the past, to make the past into the present, comfortable in its familiarity. And to do that is to miss important lessons.

A common temptation is to assume that people in the past did not really mean what they were saying.

One of those lessons is the courageousness of the handful in the nineteenth century who insisted women could be, and ought to be, educated in college just as men were. They insisted on the goal when they had no models and no proof. They could not point reassuringly to the reality of my students in the 1980s. All they had was the principle of justice and the courage of their convictions. It is not just that they were operating on faith. That is often said of pioneers—and it misses an important dimension of their actions. These pioneers were pursuing a course that was not only untried, but one that the most judicious counsel of their time advised was a terrible blunder, something that would ruin individual lives and society itself. College education was not simply novel, but an ominous threat to the family, the state, and the natural order.

Why stress all this? One reason is to appreciate more fully the heroines we have. Another is because we, too, live in a time when proposals are being urged to change the place of women. But what is being advocated strikes many cautious observers as fraught with peril, dangerous threats to the family, the state, and the natural order. Our society has heard such cautions before. And on education they were wrong, dead wrong. One might say laughably wrong, except for the damage they did to the lives of so many people.

Do earlier misperceptions make all current proposals for change right? Of course not. But when we find we have assumptions and are engaged in behavior that our forebears damned unequivocally, passionately, and fearfully, is that not a lesson as we in turn look to the future? And does this not suggest that when we hear proposals conscientiously based on principles of justice, we ought to respond with hope and energy, not fear and foot-dragging?

On occasion, in discussions of feminism—discussions which tacitly assume college education for women—I try to explain that what is at issue is not simply equal pay or access to careers, but radical redefinitions of what a career is and reformulations of family roles. If I am sufficiently eloquent or the listener sufficiently prescient, there is often a long, frowning silence. Then, "but surely," comes the concerned and puzzled reply, "feminists can't be serious. That's just impossible. It would change our whole society." At that it is my turn for silence. How can I explain about my students who ought not exist?

Theatre

When the Theatre Rocked the Cradle

A Thirties Revival Recalls a Radical Era

John Steven Paul

I

John Houseman designed the Acting Company's recent revival of Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* to hearken back to the original production and its circumstances. Houseman produced the original for the Works Progress Administration's Federal Theatre Project in 1937 with Orson Welles directing. This spirited revival of the play with music opened last spring at New York's City Center and its national tour included a summer stop at Ravinia Park, the picnic spot for Chicago's cultural establishment.

The Cradle has been called an American *Threepenny Opera* and if the Blitzstein work differs from the Brecht-Weill classic in its naivete, it resembles its German predecessor in its musical form, its ironic humor, and its searing indictment of conventional society. The story is set in Steeltown, U.S.A., a company town owned and run by the steel boss Mis-

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In Blitzstein's inquiry, Religion, the Press, Education, Medicine—all the bastions of bourgeois civilization—reveal themselves as habitual prostitutes.

ter Mister. Mister Mister also owns and runs the lives of the folks who live in Steeltown, like Moll, a girl whose blues ballad, "The Nickel Under The Foot," opens the score. The economic facts of life in Steeltown permit her to work only two days a week. In order to eat on the other five days, Moll turns desperately to prostitution.

Meanwhile, a young union organizer, Larry Foreman, is trying to wrest the town from Mister Mister and to give it to the people who live and make a living there. On one particular night Foreman and Moll meet up in night court, he for union agitating and she for soliciting. In the courtroom, Blitzstein broadens the conflict by inquiring into the moral conduct of a number of Steeltown society's pillars. Mister Mister, it soon becomes clear, does not boss the town without help, and Moll is not the only prostitute on the street.

First among those prostituting themselves for Mister Mister is the Reverend Salvation. The smarmy Salvation's sermons have long been cued to the fluctuations of the international steel market. When in 1916 good business dictated selling armaments to all warring parties in Europe, Salvation preached neutrality thinly disguised as pacifism. When joining the war on the side of Britain and France looked profitable, the minister's homilies extolled peace that passes all understanding and death to the Hun in a war to end all wars. As long as the Reverend receives his weekly "collection" from the Misters, the content of his message is entirely malleable.

The Misters have persuaded Reverend Salvation and others of Steeltown's solid citizens to join their "Liberty Committee" to protect the town against "union tyranny." Other members include Editor Daily whose enforced loyalty to Mister Mister is a mockery of the freedom of the press. In order to retain his publishing privilege, the editor runs a slander series against Mister Mister's enemy, Larry Foreman. When Mister Mister needs to round up anti-union goons he suggests that President Prexy of College University require two years of military training of all male students. To keep his powerful trustee happy, the president readily agrees to his demands and then finds him a suitable faculty propagandist for the recruitment rally. Mister Mister names Dr. Specialist chairman of the Liberty Committee—an appointment that wins the physician a prestigious research position—in return for his certification that one of Mister Mister's employees, Joe Worker, was drunk and fell into a ladle of molten steel. The truth, of course, is that the employee, who had been campaigning for the union, was pushed.

In Blitzstein's inquiry, Religion, the Press, Education, Medicine—all the bastions of bourgeois civilization—reveal themselves as habitual prostitutes. Nor does Art have any claim to integrity. Yasha and Dauber, musician and artist respectively, play up to Mrs. Mister's vanity, and she patronizes them in return. Again this year the artists' grim prospects will force them to Mrs. Mister's banal but bountiful weekend salons. When she asks them to join her husband's Liberty Committee they accept without question. After all, they sing, we're not politicians, but artists.

> And we love art for art's sake
> It's smart for art's sake
> to part for art's sake
> With your heart for art's sake
> And your mind for art's sake
> Be blind for art's sake
> And deaf for art's sake
> And dumb for art's sake
> Until for art's sake
> They kill for art's sake
> All the art for art's sake.

But *The Cradle Will Rock* indicts the establishment types on more counts than just prostitution; their crimes are not victimless. Their collusion with the boss results in injustice and exploitation, in unemployment, hunger, ill-housing. The Misters and their Liberty Committee have deprived the Joe Workers of just that, their liberty, and of other constitutionally-guaranteed rights such as the pursuit of happiness, and sometimes of life itself. A closed union shop, according to Larry Foreman, will restore those rights to everyone in Steeltown, protect democratic institutions, and rock the cradle of the Liberty Committee. Blitzstein portrays the choice between Mister Mister and the union, between management and labor, as a choice between fascism and democracy. The sound of marching that closes the show testifies to the people's choice, the beginning of Mister Mister's demise.

Even in 1937, in the midst of a decade that rang with radicalism (and perhaps because of this), *The Cradle Will Rock* sounded dangerously radical. The allegorical, almost cartoonish, nature of the show does not blunt the edge of its message. Its satire is abrasive; its humor pointedly ironic. Indeed it is now no wonder that its producer, the Federal Government, closed the show before opening night.

II

The rich and remarkable history of *The Federal Theatre, 1935-1939,* has been carefully rehearsed by historian Jane DeHart Matthews (Princeton University Press, 1967). The Federal Theatre Project was one of four arts components (the others being the Art, Music, and Writers projects) of the Works Progress Administration, the Roosevelt Administration's massive effort to put the unemployed back to work. According to Professor Matthews, W.P.A. administrator Harry Hopkins nurtured a special concern for artists victimized by the Great Depression. Hopkins' choice for a director of the theatre project was Vassar drama

Political enemies of Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal programs found the Federal Theatre to be an easy mark in their efforts to discredit the President.

professor Hallie Flanagan Davis, a student in the famed George Pierce Baker's "47 Workshop" in drama at Harvard, specialist in modern European theatre, and Hopkins' former classmate at Grinnell College. Together, these two idealists hoped to forge a "free, adult, and uncensored" theatre from a large, diverse, and geographically-dispersed population of unemployed theatre professionals, and to use this theatre as a means of relief, not only for unemployed actors and craftspeople, but also for the millions of people whom the Depression had deprived of entertaining and educational diversions.

The story of the Federal Theatre is that of a dozen or so notable successes, some spectacular, others heart-warming, in spite of various obstacles that would lead to the project's termination. It was Flanagan's idea to create a decentralized national theatre, subsidized by the government, modeled to some extent on the state theatres of Europe. With this goal in mind she set out to win an audience around the U.S. with performances of every kind, including straight drama, musical revues and vaudeville, children's plays, marionettes, and opera. Flanagan also encouraged experimentation, and the FTP became famous for developing an entirely new form of drama called "the living newspaper," which today's television viewer might dub "docu-drama." Federal Theatre productions played to well over thirty million people, many of whom had never seen live theatre.

Despite Flanagan's attempt to decentralize the Federal Theatre, the project fared best in the large urban centers, especially Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. One of Chicago's memorable contributions was *The Swing Mikado,* an original adaptation of the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta performed by an all-Negro cast. Indeed, one of the most important contributions of the FTP as a whole was the opportunity it provided Black actors and actresses for whom discrimination was as much a problem in the theatre as it was in society at large.

In New York the Negro Theatre Project was among the first of the Federal Theatre's groups to begin work. Its director, John Houseman, moved into Harlem's old LaFayette Theatre, hired nearly eight hundred people from the relief roles, and chose *Macbeth* as the company's first production. In order to insure an energetic, excellent, and innovative debut, Houseman secured Orson Welles, an *enfant terrible* barely out of his teens. Welles set the tragedy in nineteenth-century Haiti with Shakespeare's witches replaced by Voodoo priestesses. The brilliant "Voodoo *Macbeth*" was a critical and popular success. It played for ten sold-out weeks in Harlem and two months more on Broadway before going on a triumphal national tour, all under the auspices of the Federal Theatre.

The Federal Theatre Project could point to successes other than those of its Negro projects. Among its undisputed achievements were productions of *Murder in the Cathedral* and *Dr. Faustus,* both presented by the Houseman-Welles team; *One-Third of a Nation,* a living newspaper about wretched living conditions during the Depression; *Prologue to Glory,* a Lincoln play; Sinclair Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here,* a warning about indigenous fascism; and Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion.* Unfortunately for the FTP and its director, high-quality productions were all but incompatible with the concept of a relief project. The architects of the W.P.A., and even more so the Congress which funded it, conceived its role as one of employing and paying people for the shortest time possible before returning them to a recovering private sector. Hallie Flanagan's dreams of a national theatre notwithstanding, continuity of personnel and programs was the rarest commodity in the Federal Theatre.

Political enemies of Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal programs found the Federal Theatre to be an easy mark in their efforts to discredit the President. When its productions were excellent and well-received, the FTP was accused of competing with private theatrical enterprise. Worse, the Project was

The 1983 revival of *The Cradle Will Rock* opens with a reading that explicitly recalls the events that led up to the 1937 premier of the "labor musical."

attacked, especially by Republican members of Congress, for harboring political leftists, working-class agitators, and communist sympathizers and for producing plays that were salacious, unpatriotic, or simply worthless. Finally, as Malcolm Cowley wrote, the lower-middle classes distrusted anything connected with the theatre, "a sentiment that survives from the seventeenth century, when the stage, to good Puritans, was not only the devil's workshop but also the chief amusement of their enemies the aristocrats. Thus the theatre project was damned for its royalist antecedents as well as for its working-class sympathies." Under duress of such attacks, W.P.A. officials became censors of their own project.

III

Houseman had left the Negro Theatre Project to assume the leadership of the Federal Theatre's Classical Unit, or "Project 891," as it came to be called. It was in this context, perhaps, that his collaboration with Orson Welles reached its highest artistic achievement. After they had established themselves with productions of *Horse Eats Hat* and *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* at the Maxine Elliott theatre, Marc Blitzstein brought his play with music to the pair. Welles was particularly keen about working in musical theatre and after the composer had played and sung the piece for an enthusiastic Hallie Flanagan, *The Cradle Will Rock* was announced as the next production of W.P.A. Project 891.

In his inspiring memoir, *Run-Through,* John Houseman describes the events that led up to *The Cradle Will Rock*'s premier. As with all Houseman-Welles productions, the preparations were elaborate and, at times, frantic. Will Geer and Howard DaSilva as Mister Mister and Larry Foreman led the cast through the show's complicated series of ballads, arias, ensemble and chorus numbers as well as the corresponding dance routines. The many scene changes of the work were to be managed by a system of glass-bottomed scenic wagons, which would apparently have given the production a cinematic flow.

Some weeks before the opening, a W.P.A. official watched a run-through of the show and pronounced it "magnificent." Ten days before opening 18,000 tickets had been sold and on June 14 the rehearsal period culminated in a preview performance before a full house at the Maxine Elliott. But on June 12, Houseman and his staff received a memo from the W.P.A. in Washington prohibiting "because of impending cuts and reorganization, any new play, musical performance, or art gallery to open before July 1." Houseman and Welles suspected that the W.P.A. had postponed the show because its content was "dangerous" and would eventually censor the production. Protests were lodged; special pleas were pled to no avail. The opening performance at the Elliott would not take place.

The 1983 revival of *The Cradle Will Rock* opens with a reading from *Run-Through* retelling the events that led up to the 1937 premier of the "labor musical." (In New York, Houseman himself appeared on stage to perform the reading.) The section is too long to quote here, but I recommend it to you as a memoir of a time when a theatre piece in this country was considered serious enough to be banned by the government. In short, Houseman, Welles, and Blitzstein and their actors and production team set about to find another theatre to produce the show under their own auspices. They found a theatre, but in the meantime the Actors' Equity Association had prohibited member actors on the Federal Theatre Project from performing *The Cradle* on stage under any other management. Refusing to concede defeat, Houseman suggested that Equity had not prohibited the actors from performing, only from performing *on stage.* When the huge audience, which had walked twenty blocks uptown to the Venice theatre, settled in its seats, Marc Blitzstein came out on stage alone, sat at an upright piano, and began to play and sing Moll's opening lines, fully intending to sing all the parts himself if necessary.

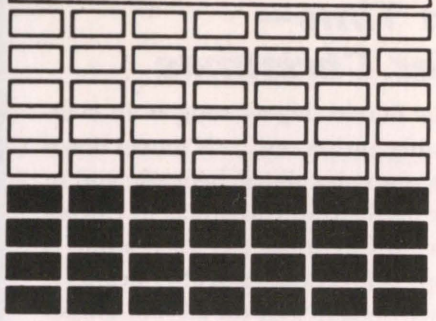
"It was a few seconds," Houseman writes,

> before we realized that to Marc's strained tenor another voice—a faint, wavering soprano—had been added. It was not clear at first where it came from. . . . Then, hearing the words taken out of his mouth, Marc paused, and at that moment the spotlight moved off the stage, past the proscenium arch into the house, and came to rest on the lower left box where a thin girl in a green dress with dyed red hair was standing, glassy-eyed, stiff with fear, only half audible at first in the huge theatre but gathering strength with every note.

The performance continued, "a breeze" after that first courageous act, with Marc Blitzstein playing and calling out essential stage directions and the singers and actors performing from the house. Houseman and Welles, severing their association with the FTP, went on to produce *The Cradle Will Rock* at the famed Mercury theatre.

The 1983 revival of *The Cradle* is played from a bare stage. A piano player is surrounded by twenty cafe chairs where the actors sit waiting to come to the front to perform the numbers without the aid of sets or elaborate props. The company is excellent—Moll is played by Patti LuPone, the original Broadway "Evita"—and there are moments when the viewer is surrounded by the excitement that, in John Houseman's words, "is generated on those rare and blessed occasions when the theatre is suddenly swept into the historical mainstream of its time."

The Last Word



A Name Is a Name Is an Identity

Dot Nuechterlein

The question vexes: if names are simply symbols of ourselves, then just who do we think we are?

My parents named me Dorothea Ida after two people—my older brother Theodore and my paternal grandmother. I liked them both, but I've never liked either name. I suspect that's because even as a child I felt somehow the names were theirs: Dorothea Ida wasn't really me.

Fortunately my parents also gave me a nickname, and until high school I never met another Dot. Movie magazines used it for Dorothy Lamour (you do remember Dorothy Lamour?), and occasionally a storybook or cartoon character with that name popped up, but in my world, Dot was exclusively mine. To this day it remains the only name in my head for myself.

My legal name is actually Dorothea Jane. Someone in the small maternity hospital where I was born apparently blundered when registering me in the Ohio vital statistics. My parents didn't bother with a correction (after all, the church records were right), and I haven't either, since this second identity always seemed a bit exotic.

At age ten I took a fancy to Jane and attached it to poetry, secret stories, and the school paper I tried to establish. Alas, one-room country schools have too few pupils to provide either news or audience: that venture failed, as did my attempts to get others to call me Jane—their habits were stronger than my wishes. Today the only reminder, apart from a faded blue birth certificate, is the middle name of my oldest child.

No matter. I discovered that as a name, Dot has a lot going for it. It cannot be mispronounced, which is a blessing to one whose maiden and married surnames are regularly mangled. Likewise, it cannot be misspelled. Oh, my immigrant grandfather, who got by in a dozen languages, addressed the only letter he ever sent me to "Dadie," but that's exceptional. The only problem I have with this name is that some people just won't use it.

A few simply do not like the informality of nicknames. Yet I figure if a fellow could take the oath of office as President of these United States using Jimmy, I in my humble station should have the freedom to go by Dot. Besides, one of my friends (YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE!) who criticizes my signing Dot to these columns never seems to use her own given name.

But some of those who won't use Dot don't get Dorothea straight, either, and Dorothy, Dorthea, and other variations irritate because they are inaccurate. A handful of friends use my childhood name Dottie, which is fine, except it always sounds a trifle funny to my ears, and seeing it in print puts me psychologically back in the second grade.

So over the years I have continually confronted the name business, and I wrestled with naming-as-part-of-identity long before learning that philosophers, social thinkers, and theologians (Cf. baptism) discuss the phenomenon.

Helen Keller supposedly said that she became truly human only after she realized that everything—every person, object, idea—had a name, herself included. It is by naming them that we distinguish one entity from another.

Which brings us to the problem of addressing a married woman by her husband's name. And this *is* a problem today: social rules have changed, and we confront such a variety of practices we hardly know what to call anyone.

Once upon a time it was necessary to know whether or not a woman was married, since neither unmarried nor widowed singles could survive independently. Forms of address told the world who was what: Mrs. John Smith had a husband to support her; Mrs. Jane Smith's husband had died (or deserted her); Miss June Smith had never had one. Today these distinctions are unnecessary, so they go largely unobserved.

When I took the vows two decades ago it was unusual for a woman to keep her name; the switch was difficult for me, and while gradually adjusting to the new last name I did everything possible to remain Dot. Mr. & Mrs. Himself is great for "couple" things, but not when the reference is to only one. Through the years I thought I felt this way because of my peculiar name-consciousness, but now I find that I have been part of a larger social change.

The majority of today's American women are in the labor force, accustomed to seeing their own names on paychecks, tax statements, and desk plaques. It is not surprising that they seem less likely to picture themselves as Mrs. Husband than was common when few worked outside their own households.

The change, however, is not limited to the employed, nor does it seem entirely a function of age, education, income, or husband's status. Women of every situation are found on opposite sides of the question, so that someone is likely to be offended whichever practice one adopts. Some pollster should do a large-scale study and let us know what women in general prefer. For if names are simply symbols of ourselves, just who do we think we are?